



Best and brightest

World leaders in creativity meet in Hasselt

6

Imperial Treasures

The toast of Vienna's museum in Flanders

8

Choc-a-block

Bruges' serenade to chocolate

13



© Lisa Develtere

Fear not for the future

A little-known group of youth advises the Flemish government on policy

ALAN HOPE

While the adults are still working after 500 days to form a government, the young people finished the process in one day. Last month, elections were held for the Vlaamse Jeugdraad, or Flemish Youth Council, in the new sci-fi hall of Antwerp's Central Station. And last week in Brussels, the new roster of members met for the first time at the council's annual general meeting. The Flemish Youth Council is an organisation you may not

have heard of, but in fact it sits right at the heart of Flanders' government. The Flemish government consulted the council on matters of policy related to young people. But even on matters where it isn't giving official advice, the council issues policy statements on questions it feels are relevant to youth. "Young people tend to always be dreaming of how things might be different," said Pascal Smet, Flemish minister for education and youth, who attended the election event in

Antwerp to take part in a discussion panel. "But on the other hand, they have such enthusiasm; they never give up." It's that idealism, he says, allied with the feeling that anything can be achieved if you work hard enough that makes young people into a real mass movement. "That's something we need to invest in and dare to use. These are, after all, the people who will determine what the future looks like."

→ continued on page 5

Mystic Lamb clean-up

The magnificent 15th-century altarpiece "The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb" by Jan and Hubert Van Eyck in Ghent is to undergo five years of restoration, but the public will be able to keep up with the progress.

The altarpiece, composed of 24 panels rich in detail and one of the most elaborate paintings in existence, is on view in Sint-Baaf's Cathedral in Ghent (detail pictured). Or most of it is: one panel, depicting the Righteous Judges, was stolen in 1934 and has never been

recovered. It was replaced by a copy made in 1945. At that time, a layer of varnish was also applied to the work, which has now turned hard and become discoloured. That is what the restorers will take five years to remove.

The Flemish government has agreed to fund the project for €1.25 million, and the work will still be open to public, promised Sint-Baaf's canon Ludo Collin. In about two weeks, tenders for the work will close, and then it will be decided how and where the work is to be carried out. ♦



© Wikimedia commons

Bicycle couriers get mobilised

Flemish government pledges support for two-wheeled alternative

ALAN HOPE

The Flemish government is to lend a helping hand to the growing industry of bicycle couriers across Flanders in an effort to cut costs, reduce emissions and give support to a thriving new business sector. Mobility minister Hilde Crevits said last week that the government's own administration would do all it could to put work in the couriers' hands. Bicycle couriers currently operate in Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Leuven, Hasselt, Kapellen and Aalst. According to a study produced for Flanders Logistics and the mobility ministry, the industry is continually developing and has changed greatly over the last decade in both structure and activity. "There seems to be a movement under way

internationally, and certainly also in Flanders, whereby bicycle messengers are becoming more professional and taking on larger volumes of work," the report said. "The sector's once rather amateurish organisation is gradually evolving to meet the current high expectations of the logistics sector. But couriers have yet to deal with one advantage their competitors have over them: The amount of work remains limited."

→ continued on page 3

FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE



© Nadine Dinter/M HKA

Dieter Roelstraete

A chance meeting has landed a Flemish museum curator one of America's most prestigious culture positions. Last week the Museum for Contemporary Art in Antwerp (M HKA) announced that Dieter Roelstraete will be moving on in the new year to take up the post of senior curator for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago (MCA).

Born in West Flanders, Roelstraete studied philosophy at the University of Ghent before joining the cinema magazine AS in 1997. A few years later, the magazine's publisher, the Centre for Image Culture, merged with M HKA, and AS merged with M HKA's publication *Afterall*.

Roelstraete published numerous articles on art and has curated many exhibitions in Antwerp, including the work of Auguste Orts, Liam Gillick and Lawrence Weiner. He also curated M HKA's current show *A Rua*, a cross-section of contemporary art from Rio de Janeiro.

Last June in Berlin Roelstraete was introduced to Michael Darling, chief curator of the MCA, at a gallery opening. He invited Darling to a lecture the next day and made such an

impression that Darling later emailed to ask if he might be interested in taking up the Chicago position, vacant now for four years.

"Dieter is a wildly productive and extraordinarily smart curator who has addressed a wide range of art – geographically, generationally, materially – in his writing and exhibitions over the past several years," Darling said. "We felt his range of knowledge and broad curiosity would be perfect for the MCA in our attempt to...seek out the most compelling art from around the world."

"It's hugely flattering, of course," Roelstraete told the *Chicago Tribune* last week from Berlin, where he currently lives. "It was surprising in the sense that of course I knew the MCA by name, but wasn't so familiar with the institution." He wasn't actively applying for jobs, he said, but after eight years in Antwerp, was "kind of looking a little bit slowly" for new opportunities. Roelstraete will move to Chicago in February after preparing a major retrospective for M HKA of the work of Brussels-born filmmaker Chantal Akerman.

News in brief

Culture minister Joke Schauvliege last week approved a grant of €180,000 for the second phase of development of the **Haacht anti-tank canal project** in Flemish Brabant. The project involves the restoration of part of a three-kilometre anti-tank barrier with a defensive water channel, constructed shortly before the start of the Second World War to repel a possible attack by the German army. The section at Haacht is all that remains and has now been declared a monument with a nature reserve attached. The second phase will include the acquisition of neighbouring land, renovation of paths and the installation of a playground.

gift. Sinterklaas also arrives in Antwerp this week (see p15).

→ www.brusselsbywater.be

Ronald Janssen, convicted last month of three murders and sentenced to life in prison by a jury in Tongeren, **will not appeal his conviction**. The Cassation Court only deals with appeals based on points of legal procedure, not on the grounds of the case. This week a court was due to begin deliberating on the damages to be awarded to 29 civil parties involved, including the families of the victims.

The sale of 93,000 special packs of the famed **Westvleteren Trappist beer** caused long queues at the entrances and check-outs of Colruyt supermarkets last Thursday, 3 November, as well as a rush on copies of *De Standaard*, *Knack* and *Le Vif*. The publications contained the coupons needed to buy one of the coveted boxes, each with six bottles of Westvleteren XII and two glasses. The beer from the Sint-Sixtus abbey in West Flanders is considered one of the world's best but is notoriously difficult to come by – only available on-site after an arduous ordering process. The Colruyt promotion was "a break with tradition" to help pay for renovations to abbey buildings.

→ www.sintsixtus.be

In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres closes its doors on 13 November for seven months for renovation and restoration works. The work is part of a €20 million package of measures announced this week in London by Flemish heritage minister Geert Bourgeois in the run-up to the centenary commemoration of the First World War. Other works include the creation of a lookout point on the Belfry tower in Ypres and the Legacy of Passchendaele site, including a memorial museum in Zonnebeke.

→ www.inflandersfields.be

Sinterklaas has announced he will arrive by steamboat in Brussels on 23 November at around 15.00, at the Akenkaai by the canal. The Sint, whose official holiday is 6 December, will be welcomed by children and their families, with entertainment beginning at 13.30. Children who download and colour a drawing from the event's website will be eligible for a special

A woman who **stole the iPhone from the wife of the American ambassador** to Belgium has been arrested and the phone recovered. The incident took place in a restaurant in Brussels. Police were able to track the woman, who also stole €250 and \$200 from Michelle Gutman's handbag, using the GPS function of the phone.

The city of Antwerp this week launched its first **Gouden Glimlach** (Golden Smile) competition, in which residents are invited to vote for the most customer-friendly local shopkeeper. The competition runs until March, and the winner receives an award, a prize package and a community party for the local area.

→ www.degoudenglimlach.be

Supermarkets Carrefour, Delhaize, Colruyt and Okay have issued a **recall notice for their store-brand milk** after customers complained of a strange taste and smell. According to the federal Food Safety Agency, the cause was a technical problem at the production plant, which supplies all four chains, but stressed there is no danger to health from the milk. The products concerned are Carrefour Discount whole milk, Delhaize 365 skimmed, and Everyday whole, semi-skimmed and skimmed from Colruyt and Okay. Customers who bring the milk back will receive a refund.

The Flemish Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research (ILVO) has joined forces with researchers from the Netherlands, France and the UK to examine the possible **threat to North Sea fisheries** posed by an invasion of Mnemiopsis, a jellyfish also known as the warty comb jelly or the sea walnut. The species is native to the Western Atlantic, but since the 1980s has begun invading the Caspian and Black seas (where it was transplanted) as well as the Baltic and North Sea, where it arrived naturally. The invader lives on fish eggs and newly hatched larvae, thus reducing the viability of fish stocks.

ALAN HOPE

OFFSIDE

What do you know?

As many people know, the Flemish government provides generous subsidies for small- and medium-sized businesses to obtain their very own in-house research scientist, under the Flemish Innovation Network programme.

What a lot of people don't realise, though, is that anyone can avail themselves of the cream of academic brains in the region, by posting a question to the new website "Ik heb een vraag" (I have a question).

Some of the pressing concerns occupying the minds of the Flemish public right now include:

- What is epitaxy?
- What is the density of seawater at a depth of 11km?
- What are the human excretory organs?

The website is an initiative of the scientific communication action plan of the government's

department of economy, science and innovation. The aim of the programme is "the stimulation of a culture of science and innovation among all levels of the population". Many turn to Google or go straight to Wikipedia to answer these kinds of questions, but you don't always know where the information comes from, and how trustworthy it may be. The new site, however, provides answers from named experts from all levels of academic life. Fourteen Flemish and federal institutions are taking part. The question on epitaxy, for example, was furnished a reply by Dr Joff Derluyn of the cutting-edge Leuven research institute IMEC. The seawater expert was Dr Jan Seys of the Flemish Maritime Institute, and the man for excretory organs was Professor Luc Bouwens of the Free University of Brussels (VUB).



© Shutterstock

For the record, the (condensed) answers are:

- Epitaxy is when you deposit a new material on top of an existing material so that it takes over the structure of the old material
- 1,062.4 kg per cubic metre
- The liver, the kidneys, the skin and the large intestine

→ www.ikhebeenvraag.be

FLANDERS TODAY



Flanders Today, a free weekly English-language newspaper, is an initiative of the Flemish Region and is financially supported by the Flemish authorities.

The logo and the name Flanders Today belong to the Flemish Region (Benelux Beeldmerk nr 815.088). The editorial team of Flanders Today has full editorial autonomy regarding the content of the newspaper and is responsible for all content, as stipulated in the agreement between Corelio Publishing and the Flemish authorities.

Editor: Lisa Bradshaw

News Editor: Alan Hope

Agenda Editor: Robyn Boyle

Art director: Michel Didier

Prepress: Corelio P&P

Contributors: Rebecca Benoot, Laurens Bouckaert, Robyn Boyle, Leo Cendrowicz, Sabine Clappaert, Courtney Davis, Nicholas Hirst, Stéphanie Duval, Andy Furniere, Anna Jenkinson, Katrien Lindemans, Marc Maes, Ian Mundell, Anja Otte, Monique Phillips, Christophe Verbiest, Alice Voz, Denzil Walton

General manager: Joske Plas

Publisher: Corelio Publishing NV

Editorial address:

Gossetlaan 30

1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Tel.: 02.373.99.09 – Fax: 02.375.98.22

editorial@flanderstoday.eu

Free subscriptions:

subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu

or sign up online at www.flanderstoday.eu

Advertising: Evelyne Gregonese

02.373.83.57

advertising@flanderstoday.eu

Verantwoordelijke uitgever:

Joske Plas

Making plans

Three young architects have launched an appeal that will allow donors to take part in designing a house for street children in Tanzania
www.plotform.eu



Instability of business biggest problem for couriers

→ continued from page 1

Some courier companies are linked to larger, more varied logistics companies; others work solely with bike messengers. One of the oldest, Flits, located in Ghent, has been going since 1999 and also operates a bicycle taxi and rental business.

Most bike courier companies are strictly local, although two companies in Antwerp and Brussels work together. One in Ghent uses couriers who are part of a social inclusion programme, while another in Leuven even takes on international deliveries.

The companies told the report's authors that they had no trouble finding suitable couriers, but the problem with employment is the rapid fluctuations in the demand for their business. The market is quite small at present; courier firms blame this in part on the lack of knowledge of their services among the general and business public, compared to cities like London and New York, where bicycle messengers are a permanent fixture on the streets.

The Flemish government is now ready to help with both of those problems: visibility of the service and stability of business. "The results of the research help us a great deal," minister Crevits said. "There is real growth potential for bicycle couriers in Flanders; they offer all sorts of advantages because they are a simple, quick and environmentally friendly way of getting around. But now the problems have also been brought to light. Bike messengers are not well enough known. A more professional approach can only improve things for them. They need a helping hand. The Flemish government is now looking into ways it can itself set a good example. The Flemish association for cities and municipalities will do the same."

What that means is that the government, together with Unizo, the organisation that represents the self-employed, will cooperate to help professionalise the couriers and to bring their services to the attention of other parts of the



Hilde Crevits receives a delivery from a bicycle courier in Brussels

business world. That could take the form of IT and administrative support, communications through various media, consultation on the setting up of a sector federation and possibly even the creation of a central contact point for businesses looking to use courier services.

Crevits is also inviting her colleagues to look within their own services to determine which document streams might be suitable for handling by bicycle couriers. A survey has already begun to log the delivery

addresses and number of packages to determine where couriers could come into play.

"Given the ever-increasing amount of traffic and the decision by some towns to make their centres traffic-free, there is certainly room for growth," said Crevits. "Too often people think of deliveries as small packages brought in vans. The bicycle courier can be a sustainable alternative." ♦

→ www.flanderslogistics.be/fietskoeriers

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

UPlace or mine?

Flanders' minister-president Kris Peeters got Oosterweel – the Antwerp road link that proved extremely divisive – taken care of some months ago. But he may find himself in front of a similar issue soon: UPlace. At least that is what Louis Tobback predicts.

Tobback is the mayor of Leuven, a well respected minister of state and the father of SPA party president Bruno Tobback. His bouts of anger are legendary and even in his 70s, he finds plenty of reasons to get angry.

The latest object of his indignation is UPlace: a gigantic "shopping experience" mall that is to be built in Machelen, just off Brussels' ring road. UPlace is planned on a brownfield, the site of a Renault assembly factory, which closed in the 1990s, leaving thousands unemployed. Lorin Parys, UPlace's COO, predicts that UPlace will create up to 3,000 new jobs. Everyone happy, then?

Well, not really. Tobback fears that the new mall will draw away punters from the streets of Leuven and other city centres. This, he says, will result in job losses that greatly outnumber those jobs newly created. Mobility experts have also warned of even more traffic deadlock on the already-overcrowded Brussels Ring. To make matters worse, two similar projects are planned in the Brussels region, less than 20 kilometres away from UPlace. Tobback has another reason to lash out at UPlace: Lorin Parys. The UPlace spokesperson is leader of Open VLD in Leuven and will probably be Tobback's challenger in the local elections in 2012. Now, Tobback is the last person to take any political competition seriously – he is often called "emperor Louis" – but that is no reason to stop him from discrediting them.

So where does Kris Peeters come into this? Last week, his government granted UPlace a building permit – sending Tobback into rage. Some months ago, though, the province of Flemish Brabant refused an environmental permit, for obvious reasons. It is now up to the Flemish government to speak out on this.

Before Tobback moved in, the socialists seemed happy enough to go along with UPlace, but it is clear that father and son Tobback make for a change of direction. This is where the parallel with Oosterweel becomes jarring: in that issue, too, the socialists (as well as other parties) flipped over, almost leading to a fatal crash for the Flemish government. Something to think about for Peeters? UBet.

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



€82,171,000

deficit for 2010 shared among the 308 Flemish municipalities, according to figures presented by home affairs minister Geert Bourgeois in a parliamentary answer. Income for the year stood at €8.695 billion, but spending was at €8.777 billion

1,371

Flemish schools, about half of the total, took part in the Tutti Frutti promotion aimed at improving children's consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables. Last year 1,139 schools took part

€520

increase in income for 27,000 civil servants of the Flemish government, under a new agreement. The increase comes in the form of extra meal vouchers and a higher end-of-year bonus

67%

of all small businesses in Flanders employ someone over the age of 50, according to business organisation Unizo

161

hours of sunshine last month, making it the sunniest October since 1965. The average for the month is 113 hours. Average maximum temperature was 16.5 degrees compared to a norm of 14.7 degrees

Tough response to weekend fighting

The city of Antwerp plans to beef up its police presence in the Seefhoek quarter following fighting at the weekend between groups of Turkish and Kurdish men. Police will patrol constantly, with regular checks of identity and searches for weapons. In the fighting, one policeman was slightly injured and five others were treated for stab wounds and other injuries.

The problem is thought to have started after some of the Kurdish men began chanting slogans in support of the PKK, the Kurdish independence party, which is in conflict with the Turkish state. Earlier in the week, unknown assailants threw a firebomb at the premises of a Turkish community organisation in the area (pictured).

The Seefhoek quarter was in the news earlier this year after violence erupted between local shopkeepers and drug dealers. Police and city authorities at that time agreed to the formation of a neighbourhood committee. At the weekend, police were on the scene within minutes of the outbreak of fighting. ♦



© Bege

Education news:

rock drawings dated, Antwerp students bound for China

Researchers at the University of Ghent have succeeded in dating a number of rock drawings unearthed in Egypt in 2008 to 15,000 years ago, using a technique known as optically stimulated luminescence. The discovery places the drawings at around the same period as cave art found in Europe dating to the end of the Late Ice Age, including the caves at Lascaux in France.

The University of Ghent this week signed a cooperation agreement with the University of Lille in northern France, to work towards the development of the European Higher Education Space and the achievement of the 2020 targets on innovation, education and research.

The University of Antwerp will exchange students, lecturers and researchers with Chongqing University in China, under a cooperation agreement signed between the two institutions during the recent trade mission to China. Antwerp will also coordinate the European Erasmus Mundus project CONNEC, which will allow about 200 students and staff from European and Chinese universities to study and work in each other's countries. ♦

Disruptions delay trains

A train from Brussels to Antwerp was delayed for more than an hour last week outside Brussels North station after a man travelling without a ticket escaped from an inspector by jumping out of a window. The train was travelling at low speed, and the man was not found. In another incident, a train from Luxembourg to Brussels was held up for three hours outside Etterbeek station after a group of youths ran wild on board the train, destroying seats and setting off the alarm. Another 16 trains suffered delays as a result, and some passengers were ferried to their final destination in taxis. ♦

Suspect witloof warning

The organisation representing producers of traditional Flemish witloof have warned customers to be on the look-out for sellers trying to pass off witloof grown in water tanks in the place of the more expensive – and this year more scarce – ground-grown variety.

Witloof, known in English as Belgian endive, is cultivated mainly around Kampenhout to the east of Brussels. It is traditionally grown in beds and covered with earth to preserve its

pale colour and typical flavour. This year, because of the dry spring, the crop is down on previous years, which will push prices up.

Brussels Grond Witloof fears some traders may substitute inferior witloof, grown by hydroculture, for their superior product. The two varieties look similar, but the taste of the hydroculture product is more bland. Customers are advised to check labelling carefully or to buy from a recognised trader. ♦

CLEARLY NOT MOVED BY GOSSELIN



The items you treasure most deserve the greatest attention when you move. They are treated with the utmost care by those meticulous men sent by Gosselin, who wrap them in that specific Gosselin paper and move them in accordance with the Gosselin master plan specially drawn up for you. Gosselin has over 70 years' experience in VIP treatment. Their service is so impeccable that you will be moved when you see their specialists at work.

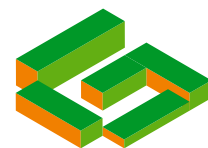
Gosselin was the first moving company in Belgium to have achieved FAIM/ISO, the international moving industry's most prestigious accreditation. With their 32 own branches across Europe, Central-Asia and the Caucasus, you will no doubt receive the service you have always been looking for.



WE KNOW HOW TO MOVE PEOPLE

Belcrownlaan 23 | B-2100 Antwerp - Belgium
T +32-3-360 55 00 | T +32-2-772 34 87 | F +32-3-360 55 79

WWW.GOSSELINGROUP.EU | INFO@GOSSELINGROUP.EU



GOSSELIN moving

BELGIUM - MEMBER GOSSELIN GROUP

Fear not for the future

Flemish youth take various paths to political engagement

→ continued from page 1

According to Rob De Donder, the council's full-time coordinator, the body has an informal as well as a formal relationship with the government, but the extent of its influence depends on the openness of whatever particular minister is holding the post. Smet, he confides, is "pretty good, but others have been a lot less easy to work with."

"That's why we also take a proactive role in triggering reflection and action," he said. "We want to be as involved as possible."

Youth priorities

The council carried out a survey a year ago to find out the main areas of concern to young people. Top of the priority list were: housing and accommodation, consumption and sustainability, democracy and forms of representation, fair distribution of world resources and the environment.

As its 2010 annual report makes plain, the council has made its views known on an equally broad range of subjects. Official advice was given in matters relating to car insurance, regional planning, fire safety, cyber-bullying, temporary employment and the VRT, as well as youth directives and education dossiers.

"Solidarity is a word we use a lot, but we sometimes forget what it really means"

The government is in certain matters obliged to ask for the advice of the youth council, whether or not it uses it. If the council's recommendations are not accepted, however, politicians must explain why. When the government does listen to the council's advice, explains council spokesperson Katrien Crispeyn, it can be difficult to determine whether it was the youth council alone that made the argument convince – or a combination with other advisory bodies. "On the question of student vacation work, for example, our ideas were listened to seriously," she says. "Around the proposal on noise limits at music events, though, there was intense lobbying by other players that echoed our point of view."

One case in which the Youth Council made a real difference was with media minister Ingrid Lieten's proposals for a new working charter for the VRT. "We called for more youth-oriented content," says Crispeyn. "She took that to heart when making her proposal and pressed home the point that young people had themselves called for more content. Sometimes our voice

gives the politicians support in what they already want to do."

Who's who on Youth Council

The council's budget is based on the youth population of Flanders, which allows it to employ a professional staff. The council itself is made up of 24 members – 12 from organisations working with or representing young people and 12 from the public, most of whom are already involved in some way or another with a youth group.

Several of those were elected last month at a huge event in Antwerp's train station, of which the rear entrance (the much less famous one) has been renovated to look like something out of *Battlestar Galactica*. There were debates featuring young politicians, media figures like *Story* editor Frederik De Swaef, academics like politics professor Dave Sinardet and speakers from the worlds of the arts and education.

Visitors were also treated to a restaurant, a chill-out zone, a radio station and even a free massage. A variety of youth groups set up stands to advertise their interests and attract new members. And everywhere, of course, potential new council members canvassed for votes.

Nine new public members were elected; three more seats will be filled in the new year by members co-opted to ensure the council as a whole is fully representative, explains Crispeyn.

"Young people are more active now than ever," De Donder says, "though it may not be as visible as before. Action often takes place on a local level, or even online. They're more interested in themes than parties. Not everyone takes the classic path to political engagement."

The youth representatives elected are a cross-section of Flanders and of political and social interests. And they are already talking like leaders.

Alexandra De Smedt, 17, from Grimbergen, Flemish Brabant, has already served one term on the youth council. "My goal is to see the translation of laws and regulations into a language aimed at young people. I also want to carry on working on initiatives between youth groups, education, welfare, mobility and entrepreneurship."

Lara Seynaeve, 17, from Brakel, East Flanders, is in her final year of secondary school, studying science and languages, and works part time as a volunteer in an Oxfam Wereldwinkel. "I want to provide people with sustainable ways of living. The south and development activities excite me enormously. The biggest challenge in my life will be to be able to make a difference in that sort of work. Solidarity is a word we use a lot, but we sometimes forget what it really means."



"I want to close the gap between young people and politicians": Youth Council representative Lander Piccart

Marie Wattiez, 24, from Leuven wants "to provide more opportunities for disadvantaged children. One in five children and young people lives in poverty. Together with the Flemish Youth Council, I want to give those children and young people more of a voice."

Isaac Verhaege, 16, from Ghent hopes to "make youth work accessible to as many as possible."

Didier Verachtert, 18, from Beringen, Antwerp province, is studying ICT and electronics at the Artesis University College in Antwerp. "I want more support from politicians for students in secondary education."

Lotta Coenen, 18, from Antwerp is in her first year of studies in pharmacology at the Free University of Brussels (VUB). "I want to see more participation – and equality – for everyone."

Toby Fischler, 18, from Antwerp is studying political science at the University of Antwerp. "I want to see the disappearance of bureaucratic systems for young people."

Sam Zahedi, 18, from Merelbeke, East Flanders, is a volunteer with a group organising holiday playground day care for children aged three to 14. "What I want to see is mobility tailored to the needs of young people."

Lander Piccart (pictured above), 19, from Merchtem, Flemish Brabant. "I want to close the gap between young people and politicians. We need to find new channels to engage young people in the formation of policy." He's also concerned about housing. "Buying a house is getting more and more expensive. The question is whether our generation is going to be able to afford it. Right now it's not looking too promising."♦

→ www.vlaamsejeugdraad.be



Get creative

Flanders DC's Creativity World Forum brings the best and brightest to Hasselt

COURTNEY DAVIS

To call one's event the "world's biggest conference on creativity" would certainly ensure a long list of speakers, but not necessarily an outstanding one. However, by bringing together Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell and Oscar-winning director Oliver Stone, Flanders DC could confidently add "best" to that tagline.

This trifecta of inspiration is waiting to take the stage in Hasselt on 16 and 17 November at the sold-out Creativity World Forum, courtesy of Flanders DC. Short for Flanders District of Creativity, the organisation is dedicated to increasing creativity and innovation through international collaboration and knowledge sharing. The annual forum's title this year is "Blow Your Mind", and they're not just talking

"If you want to benefit from cross-fertilisation, you need to be willing to be surprised by ideas and insights from a completely different domain than your own"

about the anticipation of seeing Oliver Stone. "We want our participants to get inspired by all the ideas and insights they get in the forum," explains Pascal Cools, general manager of Flanders DC. "They need to go home wanting to change things in their organisation and in their lives. So we ask them to 'blow their mind' with all these ideas."

The variety of ideas at one event is pretty unusual. It isn't common to have authors, directors and IT geeks coming together with a common vision, but it is this disparity that the Creativity World Forum hopes to tap into. "We believe very much in the power of cross fertilisation," says Cools. "Bringing together different types of people – entrepreneurs, artists, scientists, students, policymakers – out of different domains,

like industry, NGOs, the arts and research, will lead to more innovative ideas. If you want to benefit from such cross-fertilisation you need to have an open mind; you need to be prepared and willing to be surprised by ideas and insights from a completely different domain than yours."

Not just star power

The possibilities of attending the event seem to Cools almost endless. "Inspiration, new ideas, new tools, meeting new people. We also have a matchmaking service to schedule meetings for participants so they can learn about possible partners and service providers".

And they bring in the kind of names to whom you don't normally have access. But it isn't just about them being celebrities, states Cools. "We bring in these big names because we believe they have something to say. Forbes, for instance, put Malcolm Gladwell second in the top 50 business thinkers in the world. Jimmy Wales is one of the pioneers of web 2.0. Oliver Stone is a writer, director and producer, so he's very experienced in mixing the roles of being 'the creative', the one who has to execute the idea and to make money out of it."

In addition to these three are numerous other speakers, including Alexander Osterwalder, who organisers hail as "the next big thing". If you want a preview of a name that will soon be bandied about like Gladwell's, pay attention to the Swiss business author as he explains his Business Model Canvas.

Flemish artist Koen Vanmechelen, meanwhile, has travelled the world with his work, particularly his Cosmopolitan Chicken Project. This artist-slash-scientist explores bio-cultural diversity and identity with the cross-breeding project. Pattie Maes will be there, too; the associate professor in MIT's Programme in Media Arts and Sciences, who Newsweek magazine called one of the "100 Americans to Watch" (though she was born in Brussels) will present her ground-breaking artificial intelligence technology.

There's really no need to convince anyone about the attractiveness of these speakers. Seeing just one of those headliners would be



The Creativity World Forum's opening speaker, Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales

enough to ensure a sell-out crowd. Put all of them together, and you have an event that could bring in big money. But for Flanders DC, that is not the intent.

Prices for the conference are "democratic", says Cools, thanks to the support of Flemish minister of innovation Ingrid Lieten. "We are able to spread this inspiration among an audience that is normally not able to attend such events. Events like these usually cost between €900 to even €2,000 per day. The World Creativity Forum is €60 for two days for students, and companies could buy tickets from €299."

To make such an effort, the outcome must be equally interesting. "We hope that the forum can ignite a spark of innovation in our companies, which would obviously benefit the region," notes Cools. This strong focus on innovation in business and industry directly relates to the goal of Flanders DC – "to make entrepreneurial Flanders more creative and Creative Flanders more entrepreneurial".♦

→ www.creativityworldforum.be

Living in the District of Creativity

Founded in 2004, Flanders DC is one of 14 "Districts of Creativity" across the world that collaborates and shares information, approaches and tools on the topic of creativity and innovation. One obvious major way is through the Creativity World Forum. As the initiator of the DC network, Flanders DC enjoys the right to organise the forum every three years. This gives a lot of visibility to Flanders with regards to "cutting edge craftsmanship", a new tagline being used by Flanders in international communications.

"We have people from across the world attending," says Cools. "Other regions in the world also want to organise the forum. Next year it is in Rio, the year after in Tampere, Finland. Flanders DC plays the key coordinating role in indicating who can organise the forum. All of this enhances the image of Flanders as a pioneer in thinking about creativity and innovation."

A staff of 17 works not just on this event but

also on numerous other projects geared towards bringing creativity and entrepreneurialism onto the forefront of Flemish business. "We make tools that companies and schools can use in their innovation efforts," says Cools. "All of them are free of charge but developed with professors from Vlerick Management School and Antwerp Management School – most of them accessible via our website."

Flanders DC also give advice to people with an idea via their site www.sosidee.be, is involved in a new television programme on creative entrepreneurship and sponsors various entrepreneurship and creativity competitions in schools. They organise, for instance, IKANDA – shorthand for ICANDOT THAT – "the only conference for kids to convince them to do something with the ideas they have."

→ www.flandersdc.be



In-between the packed programme, the forum offers the chance to sit with creatives from around the world

Voka launches new business course

Collaboration with top schools for MBA Highlights

ALAN HOPE

The Limburg branch of Flemish chamber of commerce Voka has joined forces with two top business schools – Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management and TiasNimbas of Eindhoven and Tilburg – to offer training for senior managers and entrepreneurs. The MBA Highlights course aims to improve the running and competitiveness of Limburg companies, as well as allowing the two schools to increase their activities in Flanders.

The course is aimed at managers and business owners with at least five years of experience, who will pick up a series of skills and tools to help them grow their businesses, whether small companies or divisions within larger companies. The academic content of the course will be determined by the

two schools. The work will be carried out in project groups, and candidates will have to defend their performance before a jury. Work will be half in Dutch and half in English. Courses begin in February and run until June next year. "Entrepreneurs and senior managers take decisions daily on training for their staff, but they often pay little attention to their own development," said Paul Kumpen, chairman of Voka Limburg. "But it is important that those who are leading businesses or business units also refresh themselves from time to time. A normal MBA is very time-intensive, and Limburgers always have to travel far. This double disadvantage is removed with the MBA Highlights – all the best parts of an MBA, offered here in Limburg." ♦

→ www.voka.be/limburg/mba



© Shutterstock

Flanders refuses to bail out federal budget

The Flemish region is not prepared to make any extra contribution to the federal budget for 2012, minister-president Kris Peeters last week made clear, other than the sums involved in taking on new responsibilities and in contributing to the pensions of Flemish civil servants.

Peeters was responding to figures from the High Council for Finance, which revised growth forecasts for Flanders for 2012 down from 1.6% to 0.8%. That new forecast would leave Flanders with a hole in the budget of €160 to €245 million. "Fortunately we have built up reserves of €220 million," Peeters said. "That should help us quite a bit along the way."

He continued to reject calls for the government to make extra cuts in order to contribute to the federal budget, which will also have to make more cuts based on the revised growth figure. "Flanders has its own needs," he said. "Think of all the schools that are needed. We will have enough work to do to keep the Flemish budget in balance."

Last week Peeters met with his counterparts from Wallonia and Brussels, Rudi Demotte and Charles Picqué, to allow the three minister-presidents to work out a common position on the question of contributing to the federal budget. Demotte also took issue with the council's figures, which point to a gap of €1.4 billion that the regions would have to fill. He also echoed

Peeters' claim that the council's report was based on old and incomplete figures.

The Association of Flemish cities and municipalities, meanwhile, rejected the council's argument that the budget deficit was largely a result of the municipalities' "parlous financial state". The report is "no basis on which to work," said the association's chairman Luc Martens, who is also mayor of Roeselare, West Flanders.

The angriest reaction, however, came from Philippe Muyters, Flanders' minister for budget, in response to Luc Coene, governor of the National Bank and also chairman of the High Council for Finance. Coene had been one of those advising the regions to cut more to meet their federal obligations and made it clear the federal government would go it alone if it had to, but that "social security could then be called into question".

"It is nonsense to say that the regions need to cut deeper or there will be cuts to social security," responded Muyters. "It's not because Flanders, Wallonia or Brussels make cuts that social security will suddenly be fixed. The social security budget is going to have to be tackled, but that has nothing to do with any of the rest." ♦

Turnhout prosecutor investigating fraud case

The prosecutor's office in Turnhout is investigating a major case of fraud that may have robbed up to 400 victims of as much as €50 million. According to an investigation by *De Tijd* newspaper, the case involves Orelus Golden Invest - Elite Gold, an investment product invented by three Belgians and apparently backed by a shell company based in a PO box in Switzerland. The investment, in gold stocks, was promising 7% return, but on closer inspection it became clear that only the capital, which had to be blocked for 15 years, was guaranteed. Problems arose in 2008 when the trader who was supposed to supply the gold absconded with funds. Investors who decided to withdraw soon found there was not only no return on their stake, but that their initial capital could not be paid back. The prosecutor's office in Turnhout confirmed that four people are in custody. ♦

Transport news: new trams, speed problems in Kennedy Tunnel

Flemish public transport authority De Lijn is buying 88 new trams next year to run in Ghent and Antwerp. Fifty of them will be extra-long trams measuring 44 metres. Each of them can carry 340 passengers, compared to the current limit in Antwerp and Ghent, where 250 passengers can be carried on the 30m Hermelijn trams. The longest trams in Brussels also measure 30m.

- Truckers are ignoring the legal 50 metre minimum distance between vehicles while using the Kennedy Tunnel in Antwerp, the motoring organisation VAB said, resulting in a growing number of accidents. VAB called for freight vehicles to be diverted through the Liefkenshoek tunnel instead.

- The Flemish agency for roads and traffic plans to install 17 new dynamic information signs on the Brussels Ring starting this week, Flemish mobility minister Hilde Crevits announced. The signs are designed to warn drivers of incidents or hazards ahead.

- Automatic sliding doors giving access to Brussels metro stations have been successful in cutting vandalism by 21% in the 18 stations so far fitted, Brussels region's mobility minister Brigitte Grouwels said. The doors have also had an effect on acts of aggression, which rose by 18% in those stations, compared to an increase of 100% in stations not yet fitted with doors.

- The world "Slow" displayed on warning dummies installed near school premises in Flanders is in breach of the language law, the standing committee on language has said. By law, the language of all warning signs must be Dutch.

- Only eight railway stations in Flanders, including Sint-Niklaas, Antwerp Central and Gent-Dampoort, fully comply with the requirement to provide full access to the disabled, announced federal government enterprise minister Inge Vervotte. ♦



THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Airlines • Brussels Airlines

Brussels Airlines will close the year with a record loss of more than €70 million, due largely to high fuel prices and problems with a new Congo-based airline Korongo, in which BA holds a stake. Sales, however, were up in 2011 by 12%, and the company this month introduced a general supplement of €7.50 for every ticket paid for by credit card. Job cuts and further price increases could follow.

Autos • Sales

New car registrations dropped 2.54% in October compared to the same period last year but are still 1.14% higher for the year as a whole. The industry's federation Febiac expects this year's sales to break 2010's record year.

Distribution • ISPC

The Ghent-based ISPC wholesale group, specialised in food and supplies to the catering and restaurant sector, is said to be about to be sold for some €18 million.

Hotels • BelleVue

Up to €60 million is earmarked to renovate parts of the area near the former gueuze brewery BelleVue on the canal in the Brussels commune of Molenbeek. Included in the project is a hotel expected to open in 2014 at the earliest.

Internet • Combell

Ghent-based internet hosting company Combell, which plays host to one in five websites in Belgium, was inadvertently used by international computer hackers to collect data stolen from machines infected by the Duqu virus. The company was informed that one of its servers was being used for malicious activity and shut it down last week. The Duqu virus is thought to be a new mutation of the Stuxnet virus, which shut down parts of Iran's nuclear reactor programme last year.

Media • Barco

Technology group Barco, based in Kortrijk and specialised in projectors and displays, has won a major contract to supply and install 3,000 digital projectors in 275 cinema complexes owned by Mexico-based Cinopolis, the world's largest cinema chain, active in India, the US and Latin America.

Nuclear • FBFC

Dessel-based FBFC, which produces fuel assemblies for pressurised water reactors, will close down most of its activities by March next year, the company announced, with the loss of 120 jobs from the workforce of 150. A number of activities, including the mixed oxide fuel (MOX) division, will continue until 2015.

Retail • Hema

The Belgian website of Dutch-owned retail chain Hema was last week brought down by a huge wave of traffic caused by an error that suggested the company was giving away free cakes. The mistake led to unprecedented orders for the "free" cakes, with one customer ordering more than one million. The company is now contacting people who placed an order and considering a response to the problem.

Knowing your master

***Imperial Treasures* brings the best of its own collection together with works from Vienna's renowned fine arts museum**



Jan Gossaert's "Madonna and Child", c1525

© Vienna Fine Arts Museum

ALAN HOPE

Here's the question you have to grapple with when viewing works of art that are considered great: Is Jan Van Eyck a great painter because of works like this, or do I think this is a great painting because it was made by Jan Van Eyck?

One of Van Eyck's simple, intimate works features in *Imperial Treasures* at the Groeningemuseum in Bruges, and another of his more monumental works is part of the permanent collection of the museum, giving visitors an excellent opportunity to see two very different sides of this epoch-making 15th-century artist, who spent the final years of his life in Bruges.

Imperial Treasures comprises 54 works from the Fine Arts Museum in Vienna, once capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and home of the Habsburg dynasty, patrons and collectors of great art.

The Vienna museum, considered one of the world's finest art collections, was built between 1872 and 1891 and opened by the emperor Franz-Jozef. Together with its twin, the Natural History Museum, which mirrors it across the Ringstraße, it was intended to house and exhibit the formidable collection of art and artefacts amassed by the Habsburg dynasty.

That collection included many works by Dutch and Flemish artists of the period between 1477 and 1789 when the Habsburgs had close links with the Low Countries, including a period of imperial rule. As well as works by Vermeer, Rembrandt and Rubens, the museum has one of the world's most important collection of works by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, who lived in Antwerp and Brussels in the 16th century, including the iconic "Peasants' Wedding" and "Tower of Babel".

To give some idea of the wealth of the Vienna museum's collection, even while 54 of its Netherlandish works are out on loan to Bruges, they've still managed to curate an exhibition, running now, on depictions of winter in European art, with the starting point the famous painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, "Hunters in the Snow", from 1565, as well as works by Lucas Van Valckenborch, Karel Van Mander and two paintings by Rubens.

More than one person has mentioned to me in relation to *Imperial Treasures* the case of the Elgin Marbles – a frieze from the Parthenon now housed in the British Museum in London, and long the object of demands by Greece for their return.

According to the Groeningemuseum's curator, Till-Holger Borchert, however, the two situations are not analogous. "You can't talk about this as plundered art," he says. "The Habsburg collectors purchased these works or they were created by artists who were in the service of the family. Although in some cases we don't know precisely how the work came into their possession."

Too good to be true

The Groeningemuseum's own Van Eyck, showing the Virgin and Child – flanked by St Donatian and St George – being presented to Canon Joris van der Paele, is a large, formal work distinguished not so much for its composition as for the artist's radical new realism and his treatment of materials like the stiff drapery of the Virgin's robe, her hair, the tapestry and the rich brocade of St Donatian's robe.

The works benefit from this more intimate setting away from the embarrassment of riches of the Vienna museum

Van Eyck's realistic touch is usually attributed to his development of pigments mixed with linseed oil rather than the customary egg tempera – essentially helping invent oil painting. Contemporary British painter David Hockney, however, finds his work so uncannily lifelike he theorises that the artist used optical aids, including a *camera lucida*, to project an actual image onto the wood panel, which could then be painted over.

When we come to the Van Eyck which is on loan from Vienna, questions of optical cheating become irrelevant. The portrait of goldsmith Jan De Leeuw (pictured right), painted in the same year as the Virgin and Child work, is barely 25 x 19 centimetres, a private commission not intended for public show. The panel barely contains the man's head and chest, and in his crossed hands he holds a simple gold ring to indicate his trade. Nevertheless, it's an arresting work of penetrating human insight and masterful portrayal of character. It doesn't resemble the works for which Van Eyck is best known, yet, even if you didn't know it was by Van Eyck, it would be impossible not to be impressed by its quality.

Imperial Treasures contains many other works by both celebrated and lesser-known artists from the Low Countries in the 15th and 16th centuries, but none of them is as gripping as this portrait.



"De Holy Katharina" by Joachim Patiner, c1510

CULTURE NEWS

Flemish artist **Hans Op de Beeck's solo show** *Sea of Tranquillity* is on view now in the Caja de Burgos Art Centre in the north of Spain. The show, which revolves around the story of a fictitious cruise liner inspired by a visit to the Saint-Nazaire port in western France, consists of a mid-length movie, a large-scale sculpture of the imaginary ship, sculptures and watercolours. Several works by the Brussels-based artist are also currently part of group shows across the world, including in China, Italy and the United States.

→ www.hansopdebeeck.com

"Garden of E" is the theme of the **E-Culture Fair** at the Ethias Arena in Hasselt on 16-17 November. The free fair, which is open to the public, is a showcase of innovative Flemish products that represent a collaboration between the culture, creative, research and educational sectors. The fair is being held in conjunction with the Creativity World Forum (see page 6) and is focused on digital heritage, open-source collaborations and "edutainment". You'll find prototypes, demonstrations and working labs that bring together Flemish and international artists, researchers, designers and other creatives.

→ www.eculturefair.be

After taking a year off, the Belgian documentary film festival **Filmer a Tout Prix** is back, taking place at Flagey from 11-16 November, after which parts of the programme travel to other venues in the city. More than 100 short and feature-length films makes up the programme, all made by Belgians both inside and outside of the country. Topics are hugely varied: Bram Van Paesschen's *Empire of Dust* follows Chinese development of the Congo, and Manno Lanssens' *Epilogue* documents the final months in the life of an Antwerp woman, while Lotte Stoops unforgettable *Grand Hotel* shows the history and current state of affairs of an old colonial hotel in Mozambique.

→ <http://fatp.gsara.be>

Production house Caviar has launched the very first iPad and iPhone application for a Flemish film. **The "Porkifier"**, which can be downloaded for free, not only gives you background on the cast and crew of director Frank Van Passel's new film *Het varken van Madonna* (*Madonna's Pig*), it also allows you to transform a photo of any face into, well, a pig. The film, Van Passel's first cinema feature since 2002's *Villa des roses*, finds a travelling salesman introducing his robotic pheromone-spreading pig to farmers in a West Flemish village and is playing now in cinemas across the region.

→ www.hetvarkenvanmadonna.be



"Portrait of the Bruges Goldsmith Jan de Leeuw" by Jan van Eyck, 1436

Space to shine

The big names of the period are all represented: Hugo van der Goes, with a scene from the Garden of Eden; Hieronymus Bosch, with Christ on the road to Calvary, Jan Brueghel the Elder, with a bouquet of flowers in a blue vase; the landscape with figures by Pieter Bruegel the Elder showing a Philistine army under the rock where King Saul has just fallen on his own sword; and another Madonna and Child by Jan Goosaert, painted in stunning *trompe l'oeil*, as if in 3D (pictured).

Each one of the works is a small treasure in its own way, divided up across three rooms into religious works and portraits, the then-new genre painting and finally landscapes, one of which, the mountain landscape by Joos de Momper from 1620, seems to foreshadow German Romantics like Caspar David Friedrich by about 200 years.

Although the Vienna works, small in size, tend to suffer by comparison with the works from the Groeningemuseum's own collection, they benefit from this more intimate setting away from the embarrassment of riches that the Vienna museum represents: Like the Louvre, the Fine Arts in Vienna can be overwhelming and demands repeated, dose-controlled visits. Here, the works come into their own.

In the meantime, the ticket price includes the galleries of the Bruges collection, much of which would not have been out of place in *Imperial Treasures*: Roger van der Weyden's magnificent "Death of the Virgin" from 1475, "Last Judgements" by Pieter Pourbus and Jan Provoost, the grisly diptych

"Judgement of Cambyses" by Gerard David (in which the corrupt judge Sisamnes is shown being flayed alive; judgement paintings were popular to hang in courtrooms, to remind officials and the public alike to keep on the straight and narrow), and two works by Hans Memling – the Moreel Triptych, whose wings are backed with portraits of Christ and St George in *grisaille*, and an Annunciation from 1567 showing Mary and the Angel Gabriel, dressed entirely in white, standing in two *trompe l'oeil* wall niches.

Information in the exhibition, as in the museum throughout, is in Dutch, French, English, German and Spanish. Audio guides are available, as is a lavish catalogue in four language versions. ♦

Imperial Treasures

Until 15 January

Groeningemuseum

Dijver 12, Bruges

→ www.imperialtreasures.be



St. John's provides a caring environment, where students are cherished as individuals, encouraged to reach their unique potential, prepared to think globally with a commitment to justice and challenged to act responsibly in a constantly changing society.

We invite you to come take a look for yourself if this is the school for your family! Make an appointment to tour the school and speak to teachers and students.

www.stjohns.be

 **ST. JOHN'S
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

Drève Richelle 146, 1410 Waterloo, Belgium
Tel. 02/352 06 10, admissions@stjohns.be

We have a new face



After an extensive redesign, The Bulletin is back with a brand-new look and renewed focus on everything the international community needs to know about what is happening in the capital of Europe. Published every two weeks, The Bulletin is packed with exclusive interviews, expert analysis and your definitive guide to lifestyle & culture in Brussels and Belgium. From politics to culture, business to travel, food to fashion, if it's happening and you need to know about it, you'll find it in The Bulletin.

TRY IT OUT !

Request a free trial of three issues by visiting www.thebulletin.be/ft

**THE
Bulletin**

All for one

Puggy's multiple nationality disorder produces springy pop songs

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

Puggy are popular in France and really huge in the French-speaking part of Belgium. But they're still building a fan base in Flanders. It's a just a matter of time, surely, before this region, which loves its home-grown pop and rock bands, falls for the sparkling, at times irresistible, songs of the threesome.

Wikipedia places Puggy in the category "Belgian musical groups", but the reality is a bit more complex. Bass player Romain Descampe has a Belgian father and a French mother. He's lived in Brussels since the age of 14, when his parents moved to the city from France.

Swedish drummer Egil Franzen (known as Ziggy) also had to follow his parents as a teenager to the capital. British guitar player and singer Matthew Irons was born in this country and lived near Leuven for a while, after which his family moved to Brussels.

So, how Belgian are they, really?

"The band is Brussels based; that's a geographical truth," says Irons. "But we don't have a political agenda; we don't walk around with flags."

Descampe: "At the start of our career, the local press was stating that we were not a 'Belgian band'. But as soon as we started to have success abroad, they liked to call us Belgian."

They communicate with each other in English. But they swear in French. "Even me", Franzen admits, adding with a big smile: "When I swear in Swedish, no one gets it."

Early morning musings

Irons met Descampe at the Jazz Studio in Antwerp, and the latter was already friends with Franzen. They might be jazz trained, but Puggy is a pure pop band. "You have very few options in Belgium when you want to study non-classical music," says Irons. "The Jazz Studio in Antwerp was more lenient and open-minded than the others: You didn't have to be able to read music. Still, we were black sheep because we were playing more alternative things, not just straightforward swinging jazz."

In their spare time, the band played "at weddings, Bar Mitzvahs or whatever," says Irons, "and afterwards we would jam 'til five or six in the morning in bars in Brussels. One night, at 4.00, Romain and I were having a drink. He went on about how we should stop playing other people's music and do our own thing. A few hours later we ended up at Ziggy's rehearsal room. There was an amazing vibe, and songs were pouring out."

They finished three songs that day. "Unheard of in band terms," says Franzen.

Irons: "We quit all the other projects and bands we were in." That was 2005, and two years later, Puggy released its debut *Dubois Died Today*. The very good second album, *Something You Might Like*, followed last year.

Puggy produced that second one themselves, although that was not the initial plan. They were going to work with François Chevalier.

Descampe: "Sadly, he died two weeks before the recording was supposed to start. Actually, he was one of the few people who died of the Mexican flu." Irons: "He was on his first holiday in three years." They dedicated the album to Chevalier, who was 29.

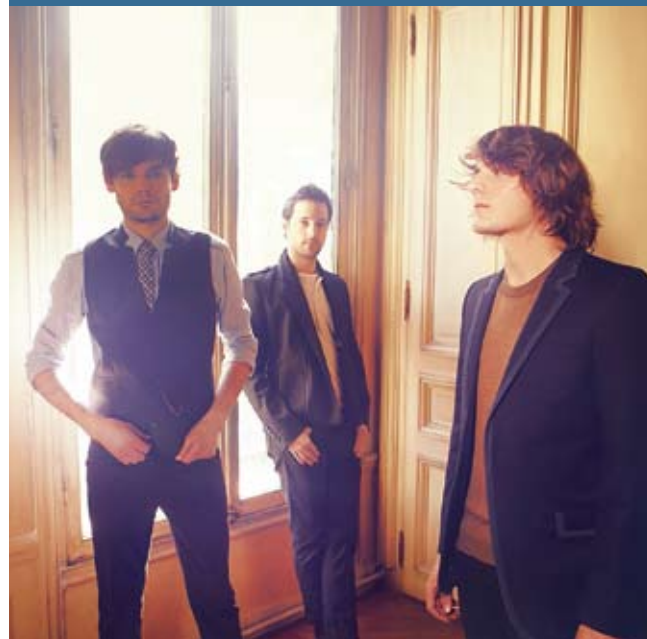
After their first album, Puggy had contact with Steve Lillywhite, the English producer who has worked with Peter Dinklage, Talking Heads and U2. Yet, they didn't think about asking him to produce their second album.

"We were stupid at the time," says Descampe. At that moment, continues Irons, "there was a lot more interest from American than English or European labels. But in the end we signed with a French one".

Three days after their upcoming gig at Brussels' Koninklijk Circus they'll be playing at L'Olympia, the mythical concert hall in Paris where the likes of Jacques Brel and Bob Dylan have thrilled crowds. Nervous, guys? Irons: "No, just excited." Franzen: "It's gonna be great to see our names in those big red letters above the entrance." Irons: "There is a sense of achievement, when you see that. It's very encouraging."

This month's Puggy concert in Brussels is sold out; see the website for future dates

→ www.puggy.fr



"When I swear in Swedish, no one gets it"

New music



Cape Coast Radio

Lieven Tavernier

Witzand · Coast to Coast

Ghent musician Lieven Tavernier is responsible for two of the most beautiful songs ever written in Dutch: "De fanfare van honger en dorst" (The Fanfare of Hunger and Thirst) and "De eerste sneeuw" ("The First Snow"), but, as a performing artist, he always has kept a low profile. On *Witzand* (White Sand), his first album in four years, he muses over things past, like his crush on '70s pin-up Laura Gemser, but also about an uncertain future. The role of Koen Gisen (An Pierlé's other half) can't be underestimated: He produced the album and played a long – very long – list of instruments. *Witzand* is a fine collection of roots rock, with some offshoots to folk and country.

Cape Coast Radio

Cape Coast Radio · Zeal Records

Since there's almost no information on Cape Coast Radio's first, eponymously titled CD, I turned to MySpace: "We're Cape Coast Radio, three friends from the African plains (Luangwa Valley, Zambia); Ed the vulture, Ned the rhino and Ted the mandrill." They must be the most musical animals I've ever heard. Their debut album contains some great indie pop with African touches. More research uncovered that the band is comprised of Nick Berkvens (ex-Transit) and Wouter and Lode Vlaeminck of toman. The latter two are busy recording their next album and will be replaced on stage by musicians from Marble Sounds, Isbells and Sleepingdog, which means that the Flemish CCR is almost an all-star band.

→ www.myspace.com/capecoastradio

FESTIVAL

Autumn Falls

21-27 November

It's only the second edition of Autumn Falls, but I already have the feeling that the autumn concert season wouldn't be complete without it. After the success of last year, the sophomore edition runs for seven days instead of three, and the concerts are spread out over eight venues across Brussels, including Ancienne Belgique, Koninklijk Circus and V&A.

Although Autumn Falls offers a wide variety of rock, folk, pop and electronic, most of the acts share a penchant for melancholy. The most impressive night is the American triple-bill of the reunited Pinback, slow core masters Low (*pictured*) and Bill Callahan, an incomparable songwriter. Australian born, New York-based Scott Matthew is, thanks to his husky voice and shamelessly beautiful songs, neither to be missed. Another band we'd like to advocate wholeheartedly is Califone, a Chicago foursome axed around Tim Rutli, who likes to cover his enchanting melodies under noisy sounds. Even if you've never heard of them, a band that titles an album *All My Friends Are Funeral Singers* at least deserves your attention, not?

→ www.autumnfalls.be



Special Edition

THE Bulletin Newcomer

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO EXPAT LIFE IN BRUSSELS AND BELGIUM

BRUSSELS
BELGIUM
EUROPE

AUTUMN 2011
€5

Welcome home

LEISURE

Bars, books and
what's on the box

WORK

Employment
and retirement

HOME

A guide to
and settling

Newcomer is published by The Bulletin twice a year to give you all the information you need to start a new life in Belgium. Our writers know the country inside-out — so we know the sort of questions people ask and the answers that can make all the difference as you settle away from home.

Preparing • Formalities

Getting legal

Before settling in Belgium for more than three months, it's important to make sure all the right paperwork gets filled out. This can be the most complicated part of the move.

visas

To simplify travel in Europe, 13 countries, including Belgium, have signed the Schengen agreement, which allows for free movement across borders. However, there are still documents to be obtained and rules to be followed if you plan to stay in Belgium for substantial periods of time.

For European Union citizens who come to Belgium for a period of less than three months (90 days), obtaining a visa is not necessary. These individuals can stay based on their national passport or identity card, provided they report their presence to the local municipal administration within eight days of moving to their new home. This is only necessary if they are not staying in a hotel, hostel or similar lodging. Certain non-EU citizens — such as those from Canada, the US and Japan — do not need a visa for stays under 90 days in any six-month period.

non eu

Non-EU nationals must have a visa if they intend to stay in the country for more than 90 days. The specific type of visa to apply for is a "temporary residence permit" or Type D. There are only a small number of reasons for which non-Belgians and non-EU citizens can obtain a visa. These are: to study, for employment for self-employment, family reunification, cohabitation and marriage. The documents required are a passport valid for at least 15 months, a certificate of good conduct issued no more than six months earlier, a medical certificate and a work permit or other documentation explaining why a visa is necessary.

For those wanting to come to the country for reasons other than work, proof of having the financial means to support themselves and their families must be obtained.

work permits

Obtaining a visa is important if you are going to be working and living in Belgium for extended periods of time. For EU citizens, EEA nationals and those of Switzerland and similar countries, work permits and professional cards are not needed, although formalities must be followed. Visit the websites below for details of the procedures for each region, and see also our explanation of Belgium's regions on p102.

FLANDERS
www.vlaanderen.be
ALLONIA
www.allonia.be
BRUSSELS-CAPITAL
www.brussels-capital.be
GERMAN-SPEAKING
COMMUNITIES
www.gemeinschaft.be



Settling down • Moving in

Renting and buying property

deposits

The lease will require you to put down a security deposit, normally equal to two months' rent, against any damage caused to the property during your lease. On moving in, tenants are generally responsible for a detailed examination of the property, called an état des lieux, and a short-term lease for contracts up to three years. The nine-year lease allows the tenant to break the lease with three months' notice (and payment of a penalty). The rent amount is fixed for nine years, apart from annual increases linked to the Belgian cost-of-living index. The short-term lease may be set for any period up to three years and may not be broken by either tenant or landlord. It may be renewed once only, up to a maximum of three years — for example, a one-year lease may be renewed with a two-year lease.

If you want to renovate a rented place, it's possible to draw up a 'renovation lease', where the landlord agrees to the transformations being made and pays the tenant by reducing the rent. It's best to get legal advice while drawing up this contract.

buying

Buying a home is another viable option if you plan on settling in Belgium on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. The first step is to find a notary, as they will need to spring into action the second you find your house. This is a legal requirement. It is typically the seller's notary that drafts the sale agreement. This is a legally binding document for both the buyer and the seller. Upon signing, the buyer becomes responsible for the property, and therefore must insure it. At the time, a down payment is also required from the buyer (usually about 10 percent of the total cost). Closing follows within four months' time.

The remainder of the money changes hands at this point. Unfortunately, the price agreed upon in the contract and the amount you end up paying can be quite different. As well as legal fees, most properties require a 12.5 percent registration tax be paid to the state. However, if

you don't own any other properties in Belgium, you are eligible for a rebate.

mortgages

Mortgages can be fixed for the term of the loan, variable annually, or renewed every three or five years, with options on the type of interest payment. The fairly common practice of using a mortgage broker can be helpful.



We can help you find the ideal neighbourhood and the right schools, and point you in the direction of where to learn a language, so you can really integrate into Belgian society. We also talk you through the social scene, getting married — or divorced — and finding a bank or health insurance policy. Not forgetting, of course, our guide to TV, books and bars.

Welcome to Belgium — we hope you like it here as much as we do.

The Autumn 2011 edition of
Newcomer is on sale at newsstands

THE
Bulletin
Newcomer

Choc yourself in Bruges

CHOCO-LATÉ

ANKE VAN ESPEN

It might seem a bit odd, but when autumn hits Bruges, the strong and cold wind, blowing over the city's small waters most of the time, is one of nature's most beautiful gifts. First of all, it makes you feel cold, your nose starts running and your cheeks are red. Thus you feel like having a hot chocolate. Secondly, the wind spreads the perfume of chocolate all over the city, forcing every choco-heart to skip a beat.

But where does that scent come from? Having more than 45 chocolate shops and ateliers in its tiny city centre makes Bruges the Mecca for *chocolatiers*. These craftspeople are responsible for making the city smell so good, and they also try their hardest all year long to surprise the sweet palates of visitors to the city. To keep all local and overseas chocoholics as their biggest fan, they need a secret weapon: new and dazzling creations, ranging from tiny flavour bombs to huge sculptures made from that lovely but bitter bean. To confirm this chocolate fairy tale, the festival Choc'in Bruges crowns the city as the world's Capital of Chocolate – all November long.

The centrepiece of the festival is Choco-Laté. The city of Bruges and the Choco-Story Museum combine efforts to organise this huge chocolate fair set in the historical and very characteristic belfry of Bruges. You can treat yourself to a taste feast, with chocolates, refined and savoury chocolate dishes and sweet drinks.

Moreover, you can participate in several workshops and demonstrations that teach you how to make your own pralines. This year's promising class

taught by the Sweets Companies' Workshop shows how to make fresh cream truffles based on sweet milk chocolate, dipped in dark chocolate.

But if your (by that time) less enthusiastic stomach should take over from your happy brain, which has been releasing too many endorphins from all that chocolate over the last hours, then you can also watch chocolate body painting or artists turning the raw material into art while they prepare their products live. Or you can surrender to some "chocolate wellness".

Last but not least, learn more about this year's central cultural theme: the Kuna Indians. Living in the eastern part of Panama, these Maya descendants use cocoa in many mysterious ways that benefits their health. Who knows, you might leave the belfry with the recipe for eternal youth. ♦

11-13 November, 10.00-18.00
Bruggemuseum-Belfort
Markt 7 Bruges

→ www.choco-late.be



© Shutterstock

CLASSICAL

He wears shiny sports shoes, charges \$50,000 for a concert and has been called "China's Liberace". Lang Lang, the world's most famous classical pianist, breezed through Bozar earlier this year and will be back in February in a solo recital for which it would be madness not to book way in advance.

With his chubby face, interminable fingers, over-the-top outfits and easy-going charm, the 29-year-old is already the stuff of legend, perhaps because his meteoric rise to fame in the last decade so neatly mirrors the economic and political awakening of his native land. The only child of two frustrated and impoverished artists in Manchuria, he became hooked on music as a toddler when he heard some Liszt played in a *Tom and Jerry* cartoon. His parents spent half a year's salary on an upright piano then submitted him to a ruthless training regimen that

makes Leopold Mozart look like Mary Poppins. It paid off, though: No piece in the repertoire is too fiendish for him, and his hands, they say, sometimes move so fast that you can't see them.

Some argue that he is all technique and no substance, a brilliant showman but ultimately shallow. Whether there is some truth in the accusation or it merely reflects the diffidence with which we tend to meet anything Chinese, there are signs that his playing has recently matured towards more depth and restraint.

His Brussels concert might turn out to be a pleasant surprise. Lang Lang has wisely picked a tasteful and musically demanding programme that steers clear of Liszt and Rachmaninov, presenting instead a Bach Partita, 12 Chopin's Etudes and Schubert's beautiful last sonata. The question now is: What will he wear? (*Marie Dumont*)

→ www.bozar.be



© Felix Brodeur/DG

Lang Lang
16 February, 20.00
Bozar, Brussels



MORE CLASSICAL THIS WEEK

Ghent

The War Requiem: DeFilharmonie, the Children's Choir of the Flemish Opera and the CBSO Chorus perform Benjamin Britten's composition about the horrors of the First World War

NOV 11 20.00, introduction at 19.15 at De Bijloke, Bijlokekaai 7
www.debijloke.be

Hasselt

Brussels Philharmonic: A concert of compositions by Pierre Boulez, Hector Berlioz and Johannes Brahms, conducted by Michel Tabachnik and featuring soprano Véronique Gens

NOV 12 20.00 at CC Hasselt, Kunstlaan 5
www.ccha.be



Freedom Festival

17-26 November
KVS & Théâtre National, Brussels

"Deconstructing myths, making utopias real" is the motto behind the annual Freedom Festival. The political and cultural event promotes the free exchange of ideas with an aim to mobilise people towards a more democratic and just society. Countless films, concerts, debates, theatre performances and exhibitions are on the programme. The documentary section, an essential part of the festival, offers up about 30 films from around the world, of which four will receive awards. The impressive concert line-up includes Marianne Faithfull, Balkan Beat Box, Jamaican reggae artist Pablo Moses and George Clinton & Parliament Funkadelic (pictured). Also not to miss is the exhibition by empathetic photojournalist Gaël Turine whose work tell stories of struggle and inequality from across the globe. (Robin Boyle)

→ www.festivaldeslibertes.be



MORE FESTIVALS THIS WEEK

Brussels

Cast Lead #2: Multi-disciplinary festival combining art, theatre, politics and debate to shine a light on the Arab Spring
NOV 9-28 at DeBuren, Oude Graanmarkt 5
www.gegotenlood.eu

Facelive: A real-life Facebook experience (ages 15 and up) where you are free to tag, poke and share things you like with people in person, plus music, food, prizes and more, on the occasion of 14 Days of Equal Opportunity and Diversity
NOV 9 13.00-18.00 at Flageyplein
www.facelive.be

Pink Screens Film Festival: Queer and transgender film festival
NOV 10-19 at Cinema Nova, Arenbergstraat 3
www.pinkscreens.org

Hasselt

Rednote Festival: Free music festival featuring a mix of classical, jazz and contemporary music by local artists
Until NOV 13 at venues across Hasselt
www.rednote.be



Cesena

12-16 November
De Munt, Brussels

Cesena: Songs for Popes, Princes and Mercenaries provides the soundtrack for this new Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker piece. In a unique collaboration with Björn Schmelzer's vocal ensemble Graindelavoix, her dance company Rosas performs in direct unison with the haunting 14th-century scores. The 19 dancers and singers run, writhe and slide

their way across a giant circle of sand, creating a fluid dialogue between bodies and music, movement and sound. While the Brussels premiere begins at 20.00 (unlike the surreal 4.30 start of the world premiere at July's Festival d'Avignon), it can equally be considered a celebration of light and the coming of a new dawn. (RB)

→ www.demunt.be



MORE DANCE THIS WEEK

Antwerp

One : zero: Innovative performance by choreographer Benjamin Vandewalle and visual artist Erki De Vries, inspired by meditation, physics and philosophy
NOV 9-10 20.30 at Monty, Montignystraat 3-5
www.monty.be

Heist-op-den-Berg (Antwerp province)

C!rca: Circus acts combine with athletic feats and flying acrobatics in this modern dance show by the famous Australian performance group
NOV 11 20.00 at Schouwburg CC Zwaneberg, Bergstraat
www.zwaneberg.be

Turnhout & Dilbeek

Women: Highly physical, contemporary dance performances featuring eight female dancers ranging in age from 30 to 50, choreographed by Ugo Dehaes
NOV 10 20.15 at De Warande, Warandestraat 42, Turnhout
NOV 16 20.30 at CC Westrand, Kamerijklaan, Dilbeek
www.westrand.be



Bronks Festival

11-13 November
Bronks Theatre, Brussels

The Bronks Festival is an annual tradition and its 20th year calls for special edition. The children's theatre is celebrating with a packed programme of workshops, theatre, dance, music and art for children and young people. Some activities take place in other venues across Brussels, but the bulk of the events are right at Bronks. Live band Mambocito Mio, for example, belts out made-to-order serenades all weekend long at the Serenad-O-Maat. Theatre diva Pascale Platel performs in *KipKappen*, a hilarious play (in Dutch) inviting kids aged 6 and up to stretch their imaginations and laugh out loud. Come to Bronks on Sunday to see *Rubber Room* (ages twelve and up), a performance that will leave you speechless as dancers defy gravity on giant elastic bands (pictured). Every night ends with an after-party compliments of kid-friendly spinning DJs. (RB)

→ www.bronks.be



© Anna van Kooij

MORE FAMILY ACTIVITIES THIS WEEK

Brussels

Big Bang: Second Brussels edition of the music festival for kids featuring concerts, installations and workshops
NOV 11 13.00-18.00 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23
www.bozar.be

Ghent

Oorsmeer: Annual music festival for kids, their parents and grandparents
NOV 13 13.00-18.00 at Handelsbeurs, Kouter 29, and Vlaamse Opera, Schouwburgstraat 3
www.handelsbeurs.be

Overijse

Kinderhoogdag: Special activities day for kids aged three to 13 and their families, featuring street theatre, storytelling, film, art workshops, music and more
NOV 13 10.00-18.00 at CC Den Blank, Begijnhof 11
www.kinderhoogdag.be/overijse

EXHIBITION

Several years ago, a friend refused my invitation to go see *Chinatown* because she said she would not watch a film made by Roman Polanski. Artistically, Polanski has provided much for film-goers to celebrate in a magnificent career spanning nearly 50 years. Morally, it all becomes a bit more complicated.

It would take quite a think to come up with a contemporary European filmmaker with a life as tragic as Polanski's. His family was forced into a Krakow ghetto during the Second World War, which his mother did not survive. Eventually separated from his father, the 10-year-old roamed the countryside by himself, witnessing great horrors.

In the 1950s, he went to film school in Poland and began making movies. He later moved to England, where he met the lovely actress Sharon Tate. After the success of films such as *Repulsion* and *Cul-de-sac*, he went to Hollywood and made

Rosemary's Baby, which became one of the English-speaking world's most classic horror films. Tate's pregnancy was the icing on the cake of their fairy-tale marriage.

Polanski was in Europe promoting *Rosemary's Baby* when he was told that Tate had been murdered in their Hollywood home by members of the notorious Manson clan. Having just made a film about an urban devil worshipping cult, the media and the public brutally questioned Polanski's private life. An emotion train wreck, he continued to work, making the film noir *Chinatown* and the erotically tinged *Tess*.

In 1978, Polanski was accused of raping a 13-year-old girl. After a confession of guilt to statutory rape, there followed a media circus of immense proportions, complete with judicial corruption. Polanski fled the United States for France and never returned. That Polanski

committed the crime is not in question: He did. The question is: Did he receive punishment for this crime? And should he continue to be heralded and celebrated as a great artist?

But you won't be bothered by these complex concerns as you go through *Roman Polanski: Actor and Director*. It is purely a look at the man's work, from his early movies made in Poland through the British years, to Hollywood and back to Europe, where, in his 70s, he continues his awe-inspiring work with films like *The Pianist* and *The Ghost Writer*. The exhibition also covers Polanski's less-known work as an actor.

It's a very complete retrospective, but if you want the full story, pair it with a viewing of the 2008 documentary *Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired*, an excellent look at the realities of the director's past.

(Lisa Bradshaw)

→ www.bozar.be

Roman Polanski: Actor & Director

10 November to 8 January
Bozar, Brussels



MORE EXHIBITIONS THIS WEEK

Brussels

Locus Agonistes - Practices and Logics of the Civic: Multi-media work inspired by the momentous historical forces and the emancipatory logics that are currently reshaping debates on civic identities, political subjectivities, cultural strategies and artistic practices in Arab societies

Until DEC 18 at Argos Centre for Art & Media, Werfstraat 13

www.argosarts.org

Ghent

Ingmar Bergman: Truth and Lies: Four years after the master director's death, the Bergman Foundation has released much of his original scripts, notebooks, schedules and sketches, which, combined with set props, costumes and video, provide a unique insight into his early efforts, his ascent as one of the world's best-known film directors and his struggles with faith

Until JAN 15 at Caermersklooster, Vrouwebroersstraat 6

www.caermersklooster.be

SPECIAL EVENT

Arrival of Saint Nicholas

12 November, 12.00
Steenplein, Antwerp

Just a few weeks before the *Sinterklaas* feast day on 6 December is another event kids have been waiting impatiently for: the arrival of the Saint himself. He makes his royal entrance by steam boat, traditionally accompanied by several helpers named *Zwarte Piet* (Black Peter) and his trusty horse, *Slecht Weer Vandaag* (Bad Weather Today). Once on land, they wave to crowds of children and are in turn welcomed by Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens. Then a lengthy parade escorts the entourage down to city hall for more fun, candy and mandarin oranges. As per usual, the whole event is televised – good to know in case of bad weather that day. (RB)

→ www.antwerpen.be



MORE SPECIAL EVENTS THIS WEEK

Across Flanders

Saint-Martin's Day: Celebration of Saint Martinus of Tours who was honoured with a Feast Day on 11 November, traditionally involving bonfires, lantern parades and children singing songs door to door in exchange for candy

Until NOV 11 across Flanders
www.feestelijkvlaanderen.be

Dilbeek

Saint Hubert's Day: Traditional folk celebration to honour Saint Hubertus of Luik, patron saint of hunting, often with rituals such as pet blessings, animal markets, hunting songs and feasts of wild game

NOV 13 in Dilbeek, Lier and Waregem
www.feestelijkvlaanderen.be

Ghent

Gravensteenfeesten: Annual student-led occupation of Gravensteen Castle based on a one-off, half-serious protest in 1949 about a rise in beer prices, followed by a parade and after-party at Sint-Pietersplein

NOV 16 at Gravenkasteel, Burgstraat
www.feestelijkvlaanderen.be

CAFE SPOTLIGHT

PM DOUTRELIGNE

Fats Domino

Kerkstraat 6, Oostende



Ostend has long had an undeniably international standing. Maybe it comes from the remarkably cheap – and now discontinued – ferry that linked it to the English port of Dover. Maybe it has something to do with the city being liberated by Canadian troops in 1944. At any rate, her most famous (living) son, rock 'n' roll crooner Arno, is a prime example of what is known as a “man of the world”. The late Marvin Gaye famously moved to Ostend in 1981 and found the city's vibes sufficiently positive to help him come up with one of the most successful comeback records of all time, *Sexual Healing*.

The café situated at number six on Kerkstraat is named after another American music legend, and a living one at that: rhythm & blues demi-god Fats Domino. The first thing that strikes you as you walk in is that it doesn't look like a Flemish café or an American bar. Instead, it has the feel of an Irish pub (A real one, that is; not one of those identikit tourist traps.)

Underneath the beamed ceiling is a rather sombre mixture of British-racing-green walls, dark wood furniture and check-patterned fabrics. The L-shaped, English-style bar acts as practical

shelving, supporting old books and scale models of naval ships. The walls are adorned with pictures of – you've guessed it – Fats Domino, as well as vintage posters of Ostend. The dim lighting adds to the feeling that, in a not-so-far-off previous life, this *must* have been a smoking pub.

The drinks menu is low on surprises. Our cappuccinos, served in '70s-type “design” glasses, were exemplary. Beer enthusiasts will rejoice at the availability of the local Keyte, first brewed in 2004 to commemorate the end of the Siege of Ostend.

If you like a good old sing-song, though, you will come here for Angelino's Show Time, a monthly homage to the hits of yesteryear, under the watchful eye of a larger-than-life compere. I mean, is there a better way to spend the evening of November 11 (11/11/11!) than with the one and only Jesse Presley? Thought not.

bite

ROBYN BOYLE

Tuscan Flavours

Take a culinary tour of Tuscany this weekend for €12. Whether you have a long-standing love affair with the region from previous travels or just a weakness for top-quality artisanal food and drink, the Tuscan Flavours fair is the next best thing to a trip to Italy.

Despite an obvious lack of sun-drenched hills and cypress trees, Het Godshuis in Sint-Laureins (East Flanders) is the ideal setting for this sixth edition of the event. The regal 19th-century abbey will be buzzing to the sound of some 50 Italian producers handing out their finest meats and cheeses, fresh pasta, truffles, honey, bread and more.

All of the products have been selected, tasted and approved by the event's founding father, Alessandro Melan. As the owner of Dolce Vita, a company specialising in Tuscan holiday accommodations, Melan launched the fair in 2004 as a way to bring a taste of the South to Flanders, known to be filled with avid culinary and wine connoisseurs.

Unsurprisingly, wine makes up the bulk of the offerings. Sommelier Pascal Mattens will guide you through the region's plethora of winemakers. Hold on to your glass throughout the visit to

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

sample Chianti Classico and other Super Tuscans. On Saturday, artist Jean-Luc Dossche will paint a giant watercolour using a brush dipped in wine.

Extra virgin olive oil is another ubiquitous item at the event. You might be surprised to discover how much there is to know about the "green gold", and even more surprised to find yourself slurping it straight up.

Learn how to best use that olive oil in your cooking at one of the ongoing demonstrations, when chefs Maria and Salvatore prepare everything from *antipasti* and *primi* to *secondi* and the most coveted desserts.

On the weekend, even the smallest *bambini* (ages five and up) can follow a workshop and learn to create their own Italian snacks and sweets. On top of that, there's a free, supervised play area for kids on site, complete with entertainment and face painting.

In case you catch the travel bug after all these tastings, there will be plenty of *agriturismo* experts on hand, eager to tell you all about the best authentic Tuscan farmhouses in which to spend a few days.

→ www.toscaansesmaken.be



📍 Het Godshuis, Leemweg 11, Sint-Laureins
🕒 11 NOV 13.00-22.00; 12 NOV 10.00-19.00; 13 NOV 10.00-18.00
💶 Entrance: €12 (kids under 12 free)
👉 Gastronomy and lifestyle fair that brings the best of Tuscany to Flanders

TALKING DUTCH

PHILIP EBELS

Brussels is tof!

Congratulations Albert Verdeyen for having been chosen *Brusseleir van 't joër*, or *Brusselaar van het jaar* in standardised Dutch, the capital's person of the year.

The Flemish TV chef is praised for promoting not only the local Brussels dialect, *Brussels*, but also its traditional dish, *stoemp*. A hodgepodge of mashed potatoes, veggies and meat of choice, *stoemp* is a perfect autumn and winter dish and a lifetime favourite of yours truly (ask my mum).

(Note: The word hodgepodge is actually a derivative of the Dutch *hutsepot*, a type of *stoemp* with carrots, onions and lard.)

Brussels is a variety of Brabants, once an influential Dutch dialect. Laden with French words, it's still spoken in parts of Flanders and the Netherlands.

Ei kreig va zainen adversaire ne coup d'tête in zain moegt. Or, *Hij kreeg van zijn tegenstander een kopstoot in zijn maag*. He got a headbut in his stomach from his opponent.

Brussels was widely spoken until the end of the 19th century, when it became socially fashionable to speak French and not-done to speak local dialects. Today, it is on the verge of extinction.

Walk through the alleys of the Marollen, the neighbourhood of Toots Thielemans and Hergé's *Quick en Flupke*, and you might still be able to catch a fluttering phrase or two – especially if you happen to get a sandwich *boudin* from Charlotte on the Vossenplein. But there is hope on the horizon for local dialects everywhere, which are experiencing somewhat of a rebirth. This Friday, for example, marks the beginning of the eighth



Weik van 't Brussels, *Week van het Brussels*, Week of the Brussels Dialect. Its slogan this year: *Brussels dialekt es tof!* Brussels dialect is cool!

In a sign of Brussels logic, the festivities will start in Ghent with a performance of the *Brussels Volkstejoeter*, the Brussels People's Theatre. All other events will take in place in Brussels, ranging from a food fest to an academic lecture, from theatre to conversation tables. Verdeyen will cook *stoemp* and sign his new book during the weekend of 19 November.

→ www.ara-vzw.be

Send your thoughts on the Dutch language – anything – to editorial@flanderstoday.eu or via Twitter on @TalkingDutch. Don't hesitate to use the hashtag #talkingdutch

THE LAST WORD...

The penny drops

"People are refusing to spend any more money on something they know doesn't work."

Leo Hendrickx of Antwerp's Obesity Centre, on news that sales of slimming aids are down 13%

Standing room only

"The benches for the public were delivered today, but where the lawyers' tables should be is still empty."

The courthouse in Sint-Niklaas has been without furniture for two months

Talking the talk

"My knowledge of Dutch is tested at every interview. You can't any longer get away with just having a diploma in your pocket."

Najat Mahjoubi, 21, lives in Brussels and is about to start work in the Sint-Jans hospital

What lies beneath

"We can't even wear boxer shorts!"

Dirk Wollaert, an extra on the set of the BBC period drama series *Parade's End*, shooting now across Flanders, on the strict underwear control of the production

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #206

Feature

Famous Flemish explorer Dixie Dansecoer is teaming up with a medical student to set a world record in Antarctica. We'll tell you what the adventurous pair are up to

Focus

This week, you found out about its Creativity World Forum. Next week, we take a look at Flanders DC's "bootcamp". Is it as hardcore as it sounds?

Living

The timing couldn't have been better for Flemish journalist Catherine Vuylsteke to release her new book: While Europe is debating the fate of long-term illegal immigrants based on recent news, Vuylsteke publishes her experiences following around minors living on their own in Flanders