

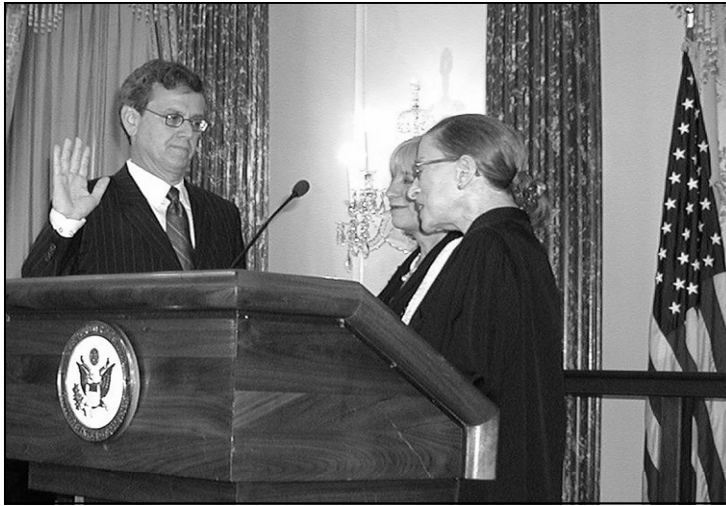
Belgium Today

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NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BELGIUM



Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg administers the oath of office to Howard Gutman, the new U.S. Ambassador to Belgium, on August 14 at the State Department.

“Belgium is in many respects the mind and soul of Europe. Its eyes and ears. And with its diverse and growing international community, Belgium is quickly becoming the eyes and ears of much of the world far beyond the borders of Europe.

Those eyes have always looked favorably upon our country, as Belgium has indeed always been a true partner of the United States. Steadfast allies through two world wars and a cold war, Belgium and the United States remain poised to face the present challenges as partners and together to create the future that we all owe to our children. Like American troops, Belgian troops work tirelessly in Afghanistan, mentoring Afghani forces, and like American F-16’s, Belgian F-16’s protect Afghani skies, all to bring about a safer and more peaceful future. With the two countries having long been vigorous trading partners, the port of Antwerp today sends more containers to the United States every day than any port in the world and even the Budweiser Clydesdales now proudly claim Belgian parentage. In turn, U.S. investment in Belgium is so extensive that one out of every 12 Belgians now works for an American company.

And Belgium and the United States both understand that this time, we cannot afford to get it wrong. That we can no longer afford to borrow heavily to pay for a fossil fuel addiction that undermines our joint national security interests and our planet. That we can no longer afford a global economic recovery effort premised on anything less than real international cooperation, transparency and lasting meaningful reform. That we can no longer afford to compromise who we are, in favor of what we want.”

These reflective remarks about the Belgian-American relationship were made by Howard Gutman to the dignitaries who attended his swearing-in ceremony as Ambassador to Belgium. (continued on page 2)

THE CANONIZATION OF FATHER DAMIEN

Father Damien, a 19th century Belgian-born missionary who ministered to leprosy patients in Hawaii, will be declared a saint at a Vatican ceremony to be held on October 11.

Born Joseph de Veuster, in 1840 in Tremelo, Belgium, he entered the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts in 1859 and was ordained a priest in Honolulu. He worked on the Big Island for nine years and then spent sixteen years on Molokai, ultimately succumbing to leprosy (now called Hansen’s disease) in 1889.



Bronze statue of Father Damien by Marisol Escobar in the U.S. Capitol

Father Damien is revered in Hawaii. In 1969, the State gave a statue of him to the United States Capitol’s National Statuary Hall Collection. In 1995, Hawaii Senators Daniel Akaka and Daniel Inouye proposed a resolution honoring the priest that was passed by the U.S. Senate. This October, Bishop Larry Silva of the Diocese of Hawaii will lead a pilgrimage of Hawaiians that will stop in Belgium before heading to Italy for the canonization in Saint Peter’s Square. Participants will visit Father Damien’s hometown of Tremelo, hear Mass at his tomb in Leuven, and tour Brussels and Bruges.

Belgian Cardinal Godfried Danneels, archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels, will travel to Hawaii in late October. He will say Mass at Father Damien’s church on the island of Molokai and, on November 1 will con-celebrate a Mass in the Cathedral of Honolulu, where a relic of the new saint will be placed.

In the past few decades, Blessed Damien has become the unofficial patron saint of victims of HIV/AIDS; his legacy includes the many Damien Centers across the United States which provide programs and services to those affected by the disease.

NEW DRIVE AT THE BACC

On October 1st, the Belgian American Chamber of Commerce in the United States (BACC) will organize an outreach event for the Belgian-American business community in Boston, with the goal of setting up a hub in the northeastern United States. This is one of a series of initiatives designed to expand and reinvigorate BACC membership.

For over ninety years, the Belgian-American Chamber of Commerce has promoted bilateral business relations between the United States and Belgium. It is one of the oldest and most established chambers in the U.S., highlighting the importance of the U.S. for Belgium and Belgium for the U.S. The BACC was formed in 1918 in response to the growing commerce between Belgium and the United States. Its executive offices are located in the heart of New York City.

This year, under the new leadership of Chairman Pierre Everaert and President Olivier Smekens, the BACC has dramatically increased its outreach. On June 17th, an event was held in Atlanta in cooperation with the offices of consul Benoît Standaert and Minister-Counselor Patrick Herman of the Embassy. The goal is that by the end of 2009, BACC 'hubs' consisting of Belgian-American corporate networks will be set up in Boston, Atlanta, Silicon Valley and the Detroit-Chicago area.

The BACC has already added 11 new Corporate Members this year, including the W Hotel in New York and Belgian companies Bekaert, Solvay, Agfa and Flanders House. New partnerships were also created with the American Chamber of Commerce in Belgium (AmCham Belgium), the Invest in America services of the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the Small Business Administration in New York.

The newly defined mission of the BACC is to stimulate entrepreneurship, by serving, for example, as a source of business information and advice for small and medium sized businesses through a newly created "Strategic Business Center," focusing on solving strategic questions and issues with regard to Belgian business expansion in the United States.

Other activities include the organization of 'Belgian Nights' celebrating all the best Belgium has to offer, as well as the BACC "Belgian Entrepreneur of the Year Award" and the "Friendship/Peter Minuit Award." The Entrepreneurship Award celebrates Belgian SME's in the US market in the fields of best product, most successful venture and ideology/business plan. The Friendship Award is awarded to a captain of industry who has promoted trade and investment between the Belgium and the United States, or to unique businessmen who stand out as examples for young entrepreneurs. The Friendship Award will be given this year to legendary Belgian cyclist Eddy Merckx, who after his success in sports went on to build a successful business empire. The ceremony for both awards will be held on November 14th in New York.

The BACC is also holding an increased number of business seminars this year. On June 5th, a luncheon 'round table' discussed the recent proposals by the newly created Belgian Business Council to improve Belgium's business climate. The Council will serve as an informal economic advisory council to the Belgian Foreign Minister. Other seminars discussed the acquisition of Anheuser-Busch by InBev, and the economic outlook for 2009.

U2 AND THE US AVIONICS INDUSTRY: AMBASSADOR HOSTS BARCO EVENING

On August 10, a group of high-level representatives of the U.S. avionics and electronics industries gathered at the Belgian Residence at the invitation of Ambassador and Mrs. Jan Matthysen. The dinner/reception was held in honor of the visit to the United States of Mr. Eric Van Zele, the new CEO of Belgian company and global imaging technologies leader Barco N.V.

Welcoming Mr. Van Zele and his guests, the Ambassador praised the way Barco has "managed to remain a truly Belgian company, while becoming a truly American one, with important activities and workforces in California, Georgia, Texas, Oregon and Ohio." Mr. Van Zele reminded guests of how important Barco's technological and financial links with the U.S. have always been, as evidenced by the fact that the company's name was originally an acronym for **B**elgian **A**merican **R**adio **C**orporation.

Mr. Van Zele's presentation also featured a number of images of Barco products used on U2's North American Vertigo Tour. The company's Olite 510 indoor/outdoor SMD LED display technology was also the centerpiece of "The Claw," the new stage design for the European leg of U2's 360° Tour.

AMBASSADOR GUTMAN (continued from page 1)

Ambassador Gutman left for Brussels on August 20th and is clearly very excited about serving in the Belgian capital. He will soon present his credentials to HM the King of the Belgians.

Formerly a partner at Williams & Connolly LLP, Howard Gutman was identified as one of "Washington's Top Lawyers" by *Washingtonian* magazine in 2004 and 2007. His areas of practice have focused on the complete range of complex commercial litigation, including securities, contracts, antitrust, labor, banking, real estate, insurance coverage, RICO and partnership disputes. Outside the firm, Ambassador Gutman has served as an advisor to a variety of Democratic political candidates, including President Obama. Perhaps less known is the fact that Ambassador Gutman also likes acting: he appeared in several episodes of the HBO series "K Street" and has made other movie and media appearances.

Ambassador Gutman is in many ways the personification of the American dream. Son of a Holocaust survivor, he grew up in Queens, New York, and excelled in school, graduating *summa cum laude* from Columbia University and *magna cum laude* from Harvard Law School. He is married to Dr. Michelle Loewinger; they have two children, Chase and Collin.

We wish Ambassador Gutman and his family a warm welcome in the country he will call "home" for the next four years, and all the best in his endeavors.

LUC TUYMANS RETROSPECTIVE

The most comprehensive presentation of the art of contemporary artist Luc Tuymans will begin in the United States and then travel to Belgium. On September 17, an exhibition of more than 70 key paintings from 1978 to the present debuts at the Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, which jointly organized the show with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, its second venue. The show's tour will include the Dallas Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Chicago, and finally, the Bozar Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels.

Luc Tuymans is considered one of the most accomplished and influential painters working in the world today. Born (1958) and raised in Antwerp, where he lives and works, Tuymans draws on the vast heritage of the Northern European painting. At the same time, as a child of the 1950s and 1960s, he is deeply interested in and understandably influenced by photography, television and cinema. Also interested in the lingering effects of World War II on the lives of Europeans, he frequently explores issues of history and memory.



Luc Tuymans
Schwarzheide, 1986
oil on canvas
23 5/8" x 27 1/2"
Private collection
© Luc Tuymans
Photo: courtesy
David Zwirner,
New York

STOCLET PALACE HONORED BY UNESCO



Stoclet Palace
façade detail
©UNESCO/Ville de Goovet/MBC/DMS

The Stoclet Palace in Brussels has been added to UNESCO's roster of World Heritage Sites. The building was designed in 1905 by Austrian architect Josef Hoffmann for banker and collector Adolphe Stoclet. It is considered an icon of the Viennese Secessionist Movement and an important milestone in the history of European architecture. UNESCO states that "...[its] austere geometry marked a turning point in Art Nouveau, foreshadowing Art Deco and the Modern Movement in architecture."

The exterior of the building is entirely covered in panels of white marble framed with bronze, while some of the interiors (notably the dining room) are also finished in marble. The Stoclet Palace contains works of art by Gustav Klimt and Fernand Khnopff. The mansion has remained in the Stoclet family and is not open to the public.

Other sites in Brussels on UNESCO's list of places of cultural or physical significance are the Grand'Place and major town houses of the architect Victor Horta.

WEST VIRGINIA MUSEUM PAYS TRIBUTE TO BELGIAN GLASSWORKERS

The South Charleston Museum invites the public to the grand opening of its new exhibit *Belgian Glassworkers and the Founding of South Charleston: 1907-1928* on Saturday, September 12. The exhibition recreates the interior of the Banner Window Glass Company and brings to life the story of the Belgian immigrants who moved from Indiana to South Charleston in 1907 to make flat glass. The exhibit pays tribute to the Belgians' time-honored tradition of handmade glassmaking which had been handed down from generation to generation and to their many contributions to South Charleston. After the advent of machine-made flat glass, the Banner plant and the Dunkirk plant, another Belgian-founded factory in South Charleston, closed. However, many of the Belgians remained in the area and some of their descendants still live in the Kanawha Valley.

The new exhibit, developed by historian and museum consultant Stan Bumgardner, is the latest step in an ongoing effort to preserve the legacy of the Belgians who settled in South Charleston at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1988, Dr. Fred Barkey published the book *Cinder Heads in the Hills: the Belgian Window Glass Workers of West Virginia*. In June 2008, the South Charleston Museum Board, led by Peggy Collard Thompson, a board member and descendant of a Belgian glass worker, presented a program honoring town members of Belgian ancestry.



Detail of faded photo of Belgian glass workers blowing window glass in the Dunkirk factory



KIDS EURO FESTIVAL 2009

Following last year's successful launch, the Kids Euro Festival returns October 15-November 10 to present more than 150 free events in and around Washington, D.C.

Designed for children ages four through twelve, Kids Euro Festival is being produced through the cooperation of the 27 European Union embassies in Washington and more than twenty major local cultural institutions.

The festival will feature talented European children's entertainers from almost every performance genre. Opera for children, improvisational storytelling, puppeteers, dancers and acrobats are just a few of the exciting performances scheduled. For more information, visit www.KidsEuroFestival.org

BELGIAN FOOD AND BEER PAIRINGS



Bart Vandaele (foreground) and Jan Van Haute make sure every detail on every plate is perfect.

On July 16, Washington-area food critics were invited to expand their knowledge of Belgian food and beer pairings at the Residence of the Belgian Ambassador. Bart Vandaele, Executive Chef of Belga Café, and Jan Pieter Van Haute, Executive Chef of the Belgian Embassy, pooled their talents to create an eight-course tasting menu which incorporated a number of Belgian delicacies. Each meticulously prepared and beautifully presented course was paired with a Belgian brew. To view the menu, visit the Embassy's Web site www.diplobel.us/ and click on "news" and then on "events."

EVENTS OF INTEREST

September 12 — South Charleston, WV

Opening of the exhibit *Belgian Glassworkers and the Founding of South Charleston: 1907-1928*, at the South Charleston Interpretive Center (in the LaBelle Theatre building). (See page 3.) Info: 304 720-9847

September 17-January 4 — Columbus, OH

Major retrospective of paintings by Luc Tuymans, at the Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University. (See page 3.) Info: 415 357-4172 or www.wexarts.org

September 18 — Washington, DC

Euro Night 2009 — a showcase of culinary specialties of the European Union embassies — at La Maison Française, Embassy of France. For tickets (\$25): www.InstantSeats.com.

September 21 — Washington, DC

Picasso, Striptease van een Genie, a monologue by Jef Demedts, in Dutch, at the Washington International School. Info: 301 320-6767

September 22 — Richmond, VA

The Genealogical Research Institute of Virginia will host a presentation by Dr. Guido Deboeck, who will discuss the use of DNA evidence in his study of his family history, at the Bon Air Presbyterian Church. Info: 703 534-8827 or www.griva.org

October 5 — Washington, DC

Dutch classes— at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels—resume at the Belgian Embassy. Registration and mandatory level testing will take place on Wednesday, September 30 at 6:00 p.m. Info: 202 625-5822

October 18 — Washington, DC

In connection with the exhibition *The Darker Side of Light: Arts of Privacy 1850-1900*, the National Gallery Piano Trio will present a concert featuring works by Belgian composers, at the National Gallery of Art (West Garden Court, West Building, at 6:30 p.m.). Admission is free, on a first-come, first-seated basis. Info: 202 842-6941

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