



## CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE

Of Western Illinois

712 - 18th Avenue

Moline, Illinois

(309) 762-0167

September 2000

### EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Bavn1aol.com

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#### Flemings in the

World

Art Holevoet

#### Newsletter

Lois DeCoster

ladecoster@juno.com

#### Publicity

Mary Lorensen

### Kleine Winkel

Battenburg lace tablecloths (vinyl) are on sale at the Kleine Winkel. The regularly \$11.95 size are now \$7.00 a piece and those regularly selling for \$15.50 will cost you only \$8.00. It's not too early to begin your Christmas shopping!!

### Bloemen Van Vlaanderen

Mary Lorensen made a donation to The Bloemen Vlaanderen Fund in Memory of her family.

**Adolf & Clemence  
Verkest Boens Family**  
Swevezeele-Wyngene

### There are still plaques available.

For \$100 or more, you can have names of loved ones engraved on a brass plate, to be placed on our Bloemen Van Vlaanderen plaque. Call **Celie Donohue** at 792-8246 for information.



We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Steven Marriott family for donating the computer and software.

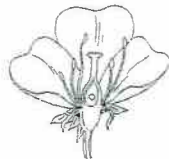
Joanne Marriott is the daughter of Margaret Fogle, Dolores Bultinck's sister.

We've already used it to print up a membership list. It is a very generous and useful gift that is greatly appreciated.

Thanks also to those members who have sent in their membership renewals. A special thank you to those of you who sent in extra money along with your membership fee. Those of you, who haven't sent in your renewals, please do so as soon as possible, so you can continue to receive the newsletter.

### Congratulations!!

Glendon and Irma Baldwin have a new grandson, born to their son and daughter-in-law, Jim and Diana Modica Baldwin. He was born on July 26 in Redwood City, CA. He weighed 7 lbs. 10 ozs. His name is Charles Glendon Baldwin. The name Charles comes from his great grandpa, Charles Van De Moortel from Belgium. He is the first Baldwin grandson of Glen and Irma.



**NOTICE FOR VOLUNTEERS:** When working your scheduled days, would you please check the messages on the answering machine, write them on the pad next to the phone and pass them on to the appropriate people whenever possible. **THANK YOU.**

**The September schedule for gift counter and host/hostess volunteers is as follows:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Gift Counter</b>	<b>Host/Hostess</b>
Sat. Sept. 2	Celie Donohue a.m./ Barb Van Nevel p.m.	Gene Donohue a.m./ Patrick Van Nevel p.m.
Wednesday, Sept. 6	Gen Vrombaut	Dorene Mummert
Saturday, Sept. 9	Marian Knock	Clara VanDeViere
Wednesday, Sept. 13	Mary Lou Andrae	Maureen Schweitzer
Saturday, Sept. 16	Evelyn VanPuyvelde	Al VanPuyvelde
Wednesday, Sept. 20	Bev Francque	Stan Franque
Saturday Sept. 23	Mary Rose DeCoster	Georgann Benson
Wednesday, Sept. 27	Lucy DeWaelche	Bob Hendrickx
Saturday, Sept. 30	Georgia Slininger	Louie Slininger

**Volunteers are still needed to add to our pool of workers for the gift counter and host/hostess hours.** If you could give 4 hours of your time once or month or even just occasionally, please contact **Celie Donohue @792-8246** or **Norma Manning @ 788-8586**. Thank you in advance.

**The August Waffle Breakfast was held August 5. It was chaired by Gene Fowler, with the help of John and Gen Vrombaut, Larry and Mary Lorenson, Mary Mortier, Al VanPuyvelde, Dave Loete, Clara VanDeViere and Marian Knock.** In spite of some rain, it was well attended.

**The next Waffle breakfast is scheduled for Saturday morning, September 2, from 8-12.** Hosts and hostesses are still needed for future breakfasts. Please contact Gene Fowler @ 788-0676 for information on what is involved.

**Every 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month Pat VanNevel will be available in the afternoon to help translate Flemish and to answer any questions may have about Belgium.**

**The Belgian Lace makers will be at the center, Sat. September 9th at 1 p.m. to demonstrate their craft.** Come and be amazed by this fascinating art.

**The September board meeting will be held Tuesday, September 12<sup>TH</sup>.**

**Mark your calendar: October 21 Old Towne will be hosting a Flea Market that will also include a Waffle Breakfast, served at the Center.** Watch for details and more information in the next Newsletter.

**F.Y.I.**

**Grant gives tourism a boost in Quad-City area      Submitted by Evelyn VanPuyvelde**

**The Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau will receive a \$4,026 grant from the State of Iowa to help advertise the Quad Cities as a tourism destination.** The money from the Iowa Department of Economic Development's Division of Tourism is aimed at the annual John Deere Pavilion newspaper tab published each April, according to Charlotte Doehler, the bureau's vice president of

marketing. The tab reaches more than 1 million households. It prompts people to seek more information about the area. The April 2000 advertisement for the bureau generated 1,000 requests for information about the Quad Cities. The bureau mailed out more than 1,000 Quad Cities Visitors Guides. The bureau also receives grant funds from the state of Illinois each year to promote and sell the Quad Cities as a meeting, convention and tourism destination.

### **In Memory of Paul Cornelis: Cousin to all Cornelis descendants**

Born September 28, 1947, Deurne, Antwerpen, Belgium

Died May 8, 2000, Antwerpen, Belgium

It's strange how small the world really is, and how we can be so removed from our immediate surroundings for years, but how close we can feel to someone half way across the world. I grew up in the Quad-Cities, the heart of one of the strongest Belgian communities in the U.S., and it took a "little old bachelor" from Antwerp, Belgium to make me aware of my proud ancestry. The Cornelis family and all of the Moline Belgian community lost a great man dedicated to making us all aware of our ties to the mother-land. Paul Cornelis died in May in his home in Antwerp, Belgium at the age of 52. He was a man that thought he never extended his branch of the family tree by children, but he did more. He gave us deep roots in our family that will never be forgotten. Paul, with the assistance of many, dated our genealogy back to the 1500s in Belgium, and then traced the pilgrimages to Moline and beyond. He developed his own family web site <http://users.pandora.be/pacorant> for all of us to see where we derived, and he followed the lives of our children as well. Paul visited Moline several years ago and quickly became a special part of the family. He also played tour guide, as he soon became "our personal ambassador" to Belgium, entertaining and making arrangements for all. I was privileged to visit Paul in Antwerp in 1992, where I met family, and saw the birthplace and beautiful countryside that my great-grandparents left more than a century ago. Two years ago, Paul visited the U.S. once more, and again, brought with him a wealth of knowledge of our Belgian ancestry. That ancestry in which I grew up, of which I didn't even realize how blest I was to be a part, until Paul Cornelis "the Belgian Connection" made the world a little smaller, drew those roots back together, and made our Flemish family tree much stronger. Paul will truly be missed by all of us. Submitted by Wendi - Fowler-Voth (Cornelis descendant)

### **The following was found on Paul's web site.**

#### *Brief history of Belgian immigrants to Moline, Illinois. This page is dedicated*

to my uncle Jule J. Cornelis (25.6.1914-24/7/1999) who sent me this article when I published the first Cornelis-family book: "Love is... a little bit of what follows".

Moline, Ill. and its environs constitute one of the largest Belgian-American settlements in the United States. Most authorities agree that Detroit is the first, Chicago the second and Moline the third. Emigrants from Belgium were attracted to the Moline area as far back 1840, according to available records. Economic conditions, plus social, political and religious problems that flared up in the motherland were some of the reasons why many Belgians came to America, and to the Midwest. Why the Midwest? – Undoubtedly, because here was fertile farmland such as they left in Belgium; also, because industry was developing rapidly and many workers were needed. Belgian emigrants came largely from the farms and small towns of the Flanders. They had little difficulty finding jobs on farms and in factories. Situated in the Valley of the famous Mississippi River, Moline and surrounding country were once the happy hunting grounds of several Indian tribes, chiefly the Sax and the Fox. Tepee villages were scattered in this part of the country. There were also many

battles between the Indians and the white settlers, who were pushing westward in the first half of the nineteenth century. Western Illinois was one of the fiercest battle grounds between the settlers and an Indian army of 500 warriors led by Chief Black Hawk, who was finally routed across the Mississippi River in 1832. A state park near Moline is named after Black Hawk in memory of this battle. Originally a river village, Moline's early history depended much upon steamer and barge traffic on the Mississippi from St. Paul, MN in the north to New Orleans, LA, on the Gulf of Mexico in the south. John Deere, a yankee blacksmith from Vermont, envisioned the opportunities of industrial development in the Mississippi valley when he brought his family westward in a covered wagon. He stopped at Grand Detour, IL, where he spent a few years before deciding upon Moline. Deere invented a steel plow, first of its kind, that would turn the heavy clay soil of the Midwest. This was what the farmers needed. From a small shop where this new plow was made, a huge industrial giant was developed. Several mills to produce lumber from the nearby forests were located along the riverfront. Moline today (1977) is an industrial city of about 50,000 people. With the adjoining cities of Rock Island and East Moline on the IL side of the Mississippi and Davenport, IA on the opposite banks, constitutes a combined quad-city metropolitan community of about 350,000 persons. It was to this area that many of the early Belgian immigrants came, as well as from other European nations, principally Sweden, and later from Poland, Italy and Germany. First a trickle of Belgians to the New World, then in droves they came, enduring much hardship enroute. Breaking family ties and starting a new way of life and unfamiliarity with the new language caused suffering and difficulties. Although records of early Belgians in Moline are meager, it is known that from 1840 to 1850 some Flemish families had arrived, namely Bernard Van de Kerkhove and Jacobus Cattour from Lembeke; Constant Van Wambeke from Tiel; Karel VandeMoortele, Bruno DeClercq, Edward D'Huyvetter and Bernard VandenBerghe from Lotenhulle. On an island in the Mississippi River, now the Rock Island Arsenal, lived Karel Goethals and Leo Schatterman of Lotenhulle and Frans Rommelaere from Beernam. Other earlier settlers included Willem and Ambrose VanLandschoot, Jan Lodewijck and Feerdinand DeBaets of Aalter. Alidor Vereecken of Lembeke arrived in 1857. Jan Vanhetzel and his wife, Felicita of Sinte-Margriete came here in 1847. Baptismal records show the first child born in Moline of Flemish parents was Clementia, daughter to Mr. & Mrs. Depauw, On October 16, 1856, and baptized in Rock Island on Oct. 20, 1856. The second was a daughter, Maria Theresia to Antoon Bouhuys and his wifer Maria Thersia Van Lanschoot, In Rock Island, November 1, 1856. Among those arriving in Moline during the period 1890 to 1905 were Karel (Charles) and Edward Coryn of Lotenhulle; Mr. & Mrs. Alberic DePoorter of Poeke; Mr. & Mrs. Edward Andries of Wingen, Camiel Bonte of Brugge and Adiel Carton of Pittem. Other early-comers were Pieter Veerdegem of Ljzendijk in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, Angelis DeJaegher and his brother Frans from Oudeman, Henri Braem of Aalter, Jan DeSutter of Sint-Laureins, Jan Beirmaert & Fransicus Thienpondt of Sint-Niklaas and Bruno DeJaegher of Lembeke. Some of the foregoing group of immigrants remained in Moline but others moved on to other nearby towns, Atkinson, Annawan and Kewanee in IL and Long Grove in IA, where they found work on farms. Many of the above mentioned names are still familiar around Moline today, no doubt descendants of these early-arrivals, also offspring of many of the early settlers are still engaged in farming in these area. With the rapid growth of the Belgian community came the need for Churches. In the summer of 1896, a newly ordained Belgian priest, Alfons DePoorter, younger brother of Alberic, came here and placed himself under the direction of Bishop Spalding of the Peoria Diocese. For a few years, he served in various churches of Annawan, Atkinson and Kewanee and in 1897 Bishop Spalding asked him to go to Rock Island to look into the possibilities of establishing a Belgian church. In 1900, the Bishop appointed him pastor of St. Anthony's, Atkinson. One Sunday afternoon in 1909, he was seriously injured in an automobile accident riding with two other priests on a country road near Atkinson. One of the priests had won the car in a church raffle in Davenport a few months earlier. Fr. DePoorter died from accident injuires at the age of 37 and is buried in the Atkinson church cemetery. An interesting account of establishment of a Belgian parish in Moline appeared in a souvenir book printed in the Flemish language by Belgian Club of Moline in 1910, title, "DeBelgische Kerk van Moline". The story stated in part: "The first Catholic Church in Moline, named in honor of Sint-Anthony, was located at 1624 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. and among its founders was a Belgian, Bernard VandeKerkhove of Lembeke. The first pastor was Rev. H. Greve. Baptismal records in this first Moline church reveal that a son Henry-Felix was born to Mr. & Mrs. Constantinus VanWambeke on Feb. 14, 1858 and a son Henry to Bruno DeClercq and Frederica DeBaets on Feb. 11, 1858. First Holy Mass was celebrated by Fr. Greve in the church June 14, 1875. At that time Moline was still part of the diocese of Chicago, but in 1881 it was transferred to the diocese of Peoria. Fr. Greve was of German origin and under his wise management, the parish grew quickly, and so did the number of Belgians, with whom he could easily talk Flemish to the satisfaction of all. St. Anthony's was soon too small and in 1878 a building was acquired at the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> St. and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. that was transformed into a church, under the title: St. Mary's Church. The first Mass was celebrated here Aug. 11, 1878 and a school

was soon added. When Fr. Greve, who was liked and admired by all, was transferred to Peoria in June 1898 and an English speaking priest was appointed in his place, the need was felt to have also a Flemish speaking priest. Therefore, the Rev. Walters was appointed associate pastor. He was later succeeded by Rev. Francis Conrad. When the latter was sent to Rock Island to found a Belgian parish, he was replaced by Rev. Charles Francken. The need for an independent parish for the Belgians was felt more and more, therefore the members of the newly organized Belgian Club addressed a petition to his Eminence Bishop Spalding of Peoria. The request was granted, and in Sept. 1906, the Rev. Father Culemans was asked by the Bishop to found a new parish. Fr. Culemans had arrived from Belgium not long before that time and he remained pastor of the new Sacred Heart Church, erected at 16<sup>th</sup> Ave. and 13<sup>th</sup> St. until his death in 1943. On Passion Day 1907, the first Mass was celebrated in the new school hall, which also served temporarily as the church. The school opened in Sept. that year under direction of the Franciscan Sisters of Peoria. The new church became a reality in 1920. Ground for it as bought at the north-east corner of 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. and 13<sup>th</sup> St. and the auspicious cornerstone laying was held 1919 with his Eminence Cardinal Mercier from Belgium (World War I patriot and hero) laying the cornerstone in the presence of several thousand persons. It was a memorable occasion not only for the Belgian people but also for the entire community. Cardinal Mercier had come to Washington D.C. on an official post-war visit and in conjunction with his American visit he accepted the invitation from his former Louvain University pupil, Fr. Culemans, to visit Moline for the new church ceremony”.

The Belgian Club, organized in 1903 had imported influence in the special life of the early Belgians. Those with theatrical talents formed a theater section, which each year, gave the Flemish speaking group, “Magnificent Galas” and other Belgians a place they could meet to get acquainted socially. For many years, the Club had a third floor hall in the former Gazette van Moline-building on the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. and 15<sup>th</sup> Street. As the oldtimers dwindled in numbers and with the formation of two new Belgian organizations, Friends Circle and East-End Club, the Belgian Club was dissolved, ironically in 1943, its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The heavy influx of Belgians to Moline in the century created its own problems. They couldn't speak English, they had no jobs, many didn't have places to live. The man they turned to for help was Ed Coryn, who had arrived in 1881 and was already an oldtimer when the newcomers came. They went to Mr. Coryn for all kinds of advice, for immigration problems or to find jobs. This came to the attention of the Belgian Government and in 1913, King Albert bestowed upon Mr. Coryn the coveted medal of Order of Leopold. After World War I, the Belgian Government established the first consulate in Moline and appointed Mr. Coryn its consul. Upon his death in 1921, the position went to his brother-in-law Cyriel DeVogelaere, who came here from Ruysede. Mr. DeVogelaere died in 1929 and Edward Andries was appointed his successor. Mr. Andries retired in 1953 and upon his recommendation Ralph DePorter was named his successor, in recognition of his work on behalf of the Belgian community. In 1963 Mr. DePorter was instrumental in organizing the center for Belgian Culture of Western Illinois. This group soon attracted the attention of a new class of people who were interested in perpetuating the cultural heritage of Belgium. One of its major projects has been the sponsorship of annual charter air flights to Belgium, directly from Moline, making it possible for people from the area to make homecoming trips to their families in Belgium at greatly reduced costs. On Armistice Day 1968, the center promoted a special program to honor Belgian Veterans of World War I. This event was distinguished by the presence of Baron Louis Scheyvens, Belgian Ambassador to the United States, who was guest speaker at the dinner in the American Legion Hall. Consul DePorter retired from office in 1973, after serving 20 years and was knighted in the order of Leopold II by Belgian Consul, General Jacques Melsens of Chicago at a testimonial program at Short Hills Country Club, June 30, 1973. On this occasion Dr. Dolores Bultinck was installed as the new consul marking the first time the Belgian Government appointed a woman to a consular position. Mr. DePorter recommended Ms. Bultinck as his successor in recognition of her untiring work in behalf of the Belgian community from the early days of immigration to this present period of the Seventies. Whereas most of the early immigrants were obliged to “dig in” the hard way, over the years, they and their families have become firmly integrated into the lifestyle of the community. Through education, they are taking their roles in the social, business and civic life. Today there are doctors, dentists, lawyers, and business people from Belgian ancestors. They are in

politics; in fact one of the area's most prominent men of Belgian ancestry was Charles Carpentier of East Moline, who served with distinction as Illinois Secretary of State. He was being prominently considered for Governor at the time he became ill in 1964 and died of a heart attack April 6<sup>th</sup> that year at the age of 67. Edward Coryn, it must be noted, was one of the first to become an active civic leader among the early Belgians. He operated a grocery business for a number of years, served 11 years as city alderman and was also Moline postmaster. At the time of his death, he was Vice President of the former Moline Trust and Savings Bank. The people of Belgian ancestry are today highly regarded, as they always have been, as hard-working, industrious people, owning their homes and acknowledged for their inborn habits of thrift and honesty. They are determined to give their children good education, so they can take their places in the world of today.

Submitted by Wendi Fowler-Voth

**PLEASE NOTIFY US WHENEVER A MEMBER OR RELATIVE GETS MARRIED, GIVES BIRTH, BECOMES ILL, OR DIES, SO WE CAN PUBLISH IT IN THE NEWSLETTER.** Call or e-mail Lois DeCoster @ 799-3433 or leave the information in the Newsletter drawer at the Center. Please submit any information you wish to have published in the newsletter by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month in order to have it in the next issue.

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