



# CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE of Western Illinois, Inc.

712 - 18th Avenue, Moline, Illinois 61265  
(309) 762-0167  
www.belgianmuseumquadcities.org



December, 2005

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

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open

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backhome1@mchsi.com

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pvannevel@msn.com

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### Flemings in the World

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Bev Fracque

### Newsletter Editor

Josh Lyphout

jlyphout@mchsi.com

### OPEN Wed. & Sat.

1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

### Waffle Breakfast

1st Sat. of each month

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

December 3rd	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
December 3rd	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
December 6th	Christmas Party	5:00 p.m.
December 19th	Board Meeting	5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
January 7th	Waffle Breakfast	8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
January 7th	Belgian Lacemakers	1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
January 16th	Board Meeting	5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Visit the Center for more information and to stay updated on current events.

## Schedule for Volunteers

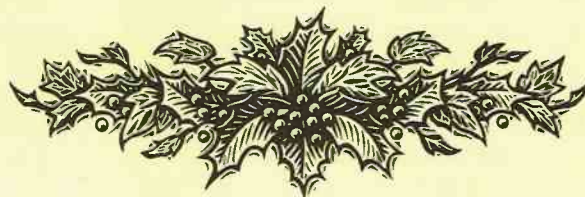
The December schedule is as follows:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Gift Counter</i>	<i>Host/Hostess</i>
Sat., December 3rd	Wilma Gusse	Maureen Schwietzer
Wed., December 7th	Al VanPuyvelde	Evelyn VanPuyvelde
Sat., December 10th	Bill Wadsworth	Margaret Wadsworth
Wed., December 14th	Mary Lou Andrae	Clara VandeViere
Sat., December 17th	Al Hoyt	Al Hoyt
Wed., December 21st	Georgia Slininger	Louie Slininger
Sat., December 24th	Closed	
Wed., December 28th	TBA	
Sat., December 31st	Closed	



Contact Margaret Wadsworth (786-5791)  
if there is a conflict with your scheduled time.

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!*



## Van Tieghem Scholarship Essay

This month we are honored to publish the scholarship essay of SARAH CORNELIS, the recipient of the Van Tieghem Scholarship fund for the year of 2005-2006. Following are her words about her heritage.

### AN EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME

Embracing and celebrating family heritage has always been an important part of my life. My mother's Irish heritage is celebrated each year on Saint Patrick's Day and a periodic flying of the Irish flag is not uncommon amongst her side of the family. Her Norwegian background, too, is remembered each year at Christmas, with the baking of special Norwegian cookies. My father's Belgian heritage is usually celebrated on Memorial Day beginning with Belgian Waffles at the Center for Belgian Culture and ending at my grandma's house with a friendly game of rolle bolle!

Learning about various cultures has always been intriguing and enjoyable to me. This interest is definitely reflected in my area of study at Loras College. I am an Elementary Education major and a Spanish and International Studies minor. This semester I have been given an amazing opportunity. I am currently studying abroad in Dublin, Ireland. I have been in Ireland since early January and will be returning home near the middle of May. I am truly blessed to be living and studying a different culture yet one that I can also somewhat call my own. There are many aspects of Irish society that I am learning about while abroad. For example, the Irish have an intense appreciation for poetry and the arts and an amazing respect for human life. In addition to learning about Irish culture, studying abroad has helped me to better understand aspects of American culture as one can view things extremely differently from the outside looking in.

### *Extra, Extra, Read All About it!*

Renilde Loecx, the Consul General of Belgium to the United States, will be making an arrival to our cities in the Spring of 2006! When Patrick Van Nevel and Augustana College extended the invitation for her and her husband to visit, she was delighted and accepted the invitation.

Mr. Van Nevel did visit Mrs. Loecx at her humble abode in New York City overlooking Central Park to discuss the visit. While chatting, a flock of pigeons flew past the window. Mr. Van Nevel made the comment that some Belgian's in the Quad Cities refer to those pigeons as the Belgian Air Force. The Consul General couldn't stop laughing. Keep your eyes peeled for further information on the Consul General and her husband's visit to the Quad Cities.

Studying abroad has also blessed me with the opportunity to travel throughout Europe. Over my two weeks of spring break, I recently visited Spain, Italy, Holland and Belgium. While each of these four countries had rich and unique traditions to offer its visitors, Belgium had the most personal significance to me. In Belgium I was able to meet and stay with a distant Cornelis cousin. It was the experience of a lifetime. Staying in a Belgian home, even for four days, I was completely immersed in the culture. Hugo Cornelis lives in a small town just outside of Antwerp called Kapellen. Fortunately, Hugo knew a bit of English, because in Kapellen only the Flemish language is spoken in regular conversations. Upon my arrival I was greeted with three kisses, a common custom in Belgium. I quickly realized that family is greatly cherished. Hugo shared a twelve volume set of Cornelis family history with me. While I was quite overwhelmed, I had never been blessed with such information. I was able to trace the exact year that my great grandfather left Belgium to come to America. A few days later I was able to celebrate my 20th birthday with my newfound Cornelis cousins, partake in a traditional Belgian meal, taste traditional Belgian drinks, and was pampered with a great deal of Belgian chocolates! Through my visit I also succeeded in expanding the Cornelis family and tried my best to share the positive aspects of American culture with Hugo and his family. It was truly a learning experience for all of us.

Through my semester abroad, I have not only learned about the culture of others, I have learned and gained a new appreciation for my own heritage. Surely my experience is extremely unique, but it is something I will certainly share with my family upon my return and hopefully carry with me throughout the years.

## Brainport Flanders

Taken from *Belgium Today*, Vol. 10.5

The United States attracts high quality researchers from all over the world, and Flanders is no exception. The Flemish Government is taking steps to ensure that Flemish scientists in the U.S. remain aware of initiatives to improve career and funding opportunities for scientists in Flanders.

Interest from the expatriate science community seems to be running high. About 70 Flemish researchers working the U.S. attended a seminar on October 28th, in New York, called "Brainport Flanders." Flemish Minister for Science and Innovation Fientje Moerman gave two policy speeches at the seminar dealing with transatlantic R&D, and mobility and cooperation between Flanders and the United States.

*continued on page 4*



## Augie Students Represent Belgium in Chicago

Few people get the chance to experience the life of a diplomat. However, students from Augustana College's International Relations Union represented the Kingdom of Belgium at the American Model United Nations held at the Sheraton Hotel & Towners in downtown Chicago. Over 1,500 students from across the nation participated, representing over 150 countries. Josh Lyphout was the Head Delegate and Permanent Representative of Belgium. There were numerous delegates in the General Assembly, as well as the High Commission for Refugees and the Commission for the State of Women; it was quite the conference. This is a model simulation to help students experience the life of a United Nation's Ambassador and is very effective at doing so.

Jane Tiedge, the IRU Club Advisor, said, "AMUN enables students to become a diplomat from a particular country and gives the student an opportunity to delve into specific topics of concern to that country and/or region. Students must be prepared to defend their country's position, be able to negotiate treaties, and if they take an unpopular stance, they must be able to defend why they feel the way they do. Participants learn about the politics, the inner workings of the United Nations as well as the need for diplomacy. It was an honor this year for our students to represent two countries – both of which were chosen for specific reasons. The first was Ghana, as Augustana will have a group of students studying there for Spring Term 2006. The second country (Belgium) was chosen in honor of our friendship with Patrick Van Nevel and Ambassador van Daele, who visited our campus last spring. The students of the International Relations Union look forward to many more opportunities to work with the Belgian Culture Center as well as enjoying Saturday morning waffles."

"The key is to walk into your committee like you own the place, speak to the body as much as possible, and get to know your allies very fast," says Josh Lyphout. "But sometimes you can't even trust your friends." Josh, spending most of his time in the UN High Commission for Refugees, said, "We (Belgium) teamed up with Finland and a couple of other European Union nations and drafted a resolution. The resolution, with the leadership of the Belgian delegation, established research into "Burden-Sharing" of refugees. The resolution also established, at the strong urgency of the Belgian representatives, an International Refugee Repatriation Day on April 29th every year, with a corresponding summit in Brussels to analyze the progress of returning refugees to their home countries.

The delegates thoroughly enjoyed themselves at the conference and can't wait until the next one. It's a great learning experience for the students and gives them a sense of importance with international diplomacy. Augustana also had students representing the Republic of Ghana, with

Casey Jacobs as the Head Delegate, who also did extremely well at the conference. Amanda Essling, a Junior at Augie, represented Belgium in the Commission for the Status of Women and received an award, thus giving the Belgian delegation a "Best Delegation Award" at the conference closing ceremonies. Congratulations to Amanda and all the students who worked very hard to prepare for this event. They are now working on preparations for the national Model Arab League conference held in Washington, DC, in April representing Palestine. Good luck to the Augie IRU!

## Belgian State of the Union Speech

Taken from *Belgium Today*, Vol. 10.5

Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt gave the traditional "State of the Union" declaration on October 11, 2005, the opening day of the Belgian parliamentary session.

In his speech, he detailed the measures that the Government is taking to further the economic performance of the country. For several years now, the Belgian economy has been performing better than the European average and, with an expected growth of 2.3%, this should again be the case in 2006.

The Prime Minister confirmed policy measures to improve employment and to stimulate investment, innovation and creativity. This will happen in the context of the recently negotiated agreement with the social partners, to ensure harmonious labor market relations, and will reinforce the high quality of life in the country.

The Government's ambitious goals will be pursued, for the seventh year in a row, in the framework of the balanced budget. Its public debt, once one of the highest among European countries, will decrease to the average debt ratio of the countries of the European Union.

Verhofstadt stressed the importance of giving new momentum to the European project, to reinforce the competitiveness of the European economy and to consolidate political cooperation among the member states. Belgium will continue its dynamic and engaged foreign policy, bilaterally as well as in international forums, with a view of promoting trade. In this context, Belgium will take up the Presidency of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2006.

At the start of this new parliamentary year it is especially the intended changes in the prevalent system of so-called "pre-retirement" which have attracted much attention.

The full text of the Prime Minister's speech can be found in Dutch and in French at [www.premier.fgov.be](http://www.premier.fgov.be).

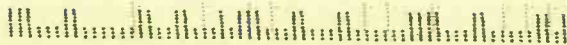
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## CENTER FOR BELGIAN CULTURE

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### BRAINPORT FLANDERS *continued from page 2*

Moerman also listened to personal testimonials from scientists and participated actively in a lively debate focused on issues such as distribution channels for research vacancies at universities, the selection process, grant mechanisms in Flanders, and the link between basic research and industrial innovation. Legal issues such as financial and linguistic barriers for international researchers for moving from the U.S. to Flanders, dual nationality, and local patents and intellectual property laws were raised as well.

Minister Moerman outlined a new program to attract more researchers to Flanders. The "Odysseus" program will have a budget of up to 12 million euros in 2006 to finance a return of scientists to Flanders. Top scientists can get between 1.2 and 1.5 million euros, while promising young scientists can expect between 300,00 and 400,000 euros. An international jury will determine the level of scientific achievement. The "Methusalem" program gives top scientists in Flanders long-term financing. The program will have a budget of 3 million euros in 2006. Researchers who leave Flanders will lose the funding.

The Seminar was seen by the Minister as the beginning of a more structured dialogue with expatriate scientists in the U.S.

## Belgium Insulted by Iran

Taken from *Global Beer Network*, Vol. 11.1

On June 30th, a delegation of Iranian Parliament members, under the leadership of the Speaker of their Parliament, Mr. Gholam-Ali Haddad Adel, paid an official visit to the Belgian Parliament. (By the way, Mr. Adel donated his daughter as a wife to the son of the ayatollah Khameni, the supreme leader of Iran. What a way to make a political career in Iran!) The Muslim zealots of Iran, disguised as democratically elected (in framed elections) representatives of their people, managed to insult the Speaker of the Belgian House and the President of the Belgian Senate.

It began when the Iranians refused to sit in at the official lunch if beer or wine would be served to the Belgian hosts. There was no intention of serving it to the Iranians. Still, they insisted that everybody would have to drink water. Adding insult to injury, when presented to the President of the Senate, the Iranians refused to give her a hand because she was a woman. The President of the House, Mr. De Croo, was so upset that he cancelled the official lunch and sent the Iranian delegation packing, cutting the rest of the official program.

Mr. De Croo wants the customary practices of Belgium respected by the guests of Belgium, and he is the first to admit that he drinks on average 8 Belgian beers per day.