

# Brussels' big bash

■ Special guests help celebrate Belgian Days

By Janet Roberts

Press-Gazette

BRUSSELS — Belgian Days is always a big event in an area that boasts the largest Belgian-American community in the United States, but there's more activity than usual this year.

The two-day festival beginning Saturday coincides with a visit by the Wallonie-Wisconsin Club's Belgian branch. The Belgian visitors have been traveling to Wisconsin every other year since 1975 and host their Wisconsin friends and relatives in the off years.

Also this year, the Peninsula Belgian-American Club is readying a State Historical Society marker commemorating the area's strong Belgian heritage, which began with the first wave of immigrants in 1853.

The community, which cuts across portions of northeastern Brown County, northwestern Kewaunee County and southern Door County, is recognized as a historic district by the National Register of Historic Places.

The club is raising money toward a \$3,300 goal to build a stone foundation and seating area for the marker, which will be erected at St. Marys-of-the-Snow Catholic Church on Wisconsin 57 in Namur, west of Brussels. The wayside should be

## If You Want to Go

**What:** Belgian Days

**When:** Saturday and Sunday

**Where:** Outdoor activities are at the Brussels Town Park, Sunday dinner at Coun's Hall, both in Brussels.

**Event schedule:** Saturday: Lions Invitational Softball; Slow-Pitch Tournament at 5 p.m., country-western music from 8 p.m. to midnight.

Sunday: 10K run and 2K fun run begin at 8 a.m.; arts and crafts show from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; parade at 10:30 a.m.; dinner served at 11 a.m.; country-western music and Cow Pie Drop game 1:30 to 3 p.m.

ready for dedication by mid- to late August, club President Harry Chaudoir said.

Some of the 47 Belgian visitors, who are staying with host families in the Brussels and Namur area, will attend Belgian Days before leaving on a bus trip to South Dakota and Colorado on Monday. Others will tour Door County and other spots in Wisconsin or just catch up with relatives and friends before returning to Belgium on July 28.

Last Saturday, a 13-member delegation from the American branch greeted the 44 visitors at Austin Straubel International Airport with hugs, words of welcome in the traditional Walloon



Press-Gazette photo by Sandee Gerbers

**Relaxing:** At Dyckesville's Lipsky's Bar are, from left, Auguste Hayot, Sturgeon Bay; Olga Fichaux; her husband, Willy Monfils; and daughter Sandrine, all of Belgium.

dialect and three-stage greeting kiss: first the left cheek, then the right, then the left again.

In the group were Willy Monfils and his wife, Olga Fichaux, who first visited American relatives in the "other Brussels" as honeymooners in 1973.

"We came to visit cousins, and we have many friends now," Monfils said Saturday. Now, 20 years and five visits later, they are looking forward to their tour out west, especially a stop at Mt. Rushmore.

In contrast, a Belgian college student is on her first visit to

Wisconsin. Laurence Lannoy, an agriculture student at Louvain-la-Neuve university in the Walloon district of Belgium, will spend some time studying local farming methods.

"I could do this work in Belgium, but I think it will be more interesting to see other processes," said Lannoy, who previously has visited relatives in Ohio. "And besides, it is something different from Belgium."

The Belgian Days festival, sponsored by the Brussels Lions Club and the Belgian-American Club, features softball on Satur-

day and races on Sunday, along with a parade, a dinner with Belgian specialties, a raffle and the ever-popular Cow Pie Drop game, if the weather cooperates.

"We were rained out last year," said Sue Marchant, who helped plan this year's activities.

The Sunday dinner features trippe, a sausage stuffed with pork and cabbage, pronounced "trip"; jutt, cabbage fried in cracklings and seasoned with nutmeg; and Belgian pie, a raised-dough crust with a fruit or poppyseed filling, topped with cottage cheese.