

## What is your favorite activity in the Netherlands?

Als ik in Nederland ben vind ik het leuk om naar Ameland te gaan omdat ik dan hele lekkere bitterballen kan eten en omdat ik dan heel erg veel kan fietsen en omdat ik mijn verjaardag daar vier en omdat ik dan mijn hele familie kan zien en dan kan ik ook nog naar het strand en het laatste ding is omdat ik dan met een boot naar een zandbank ga en dan..... zie ik heel veel ZEEHONDEN!!!!

Bedacht door Anouk, age 8

## Dutch Lessons

Once again Antonia Tripp will be offering Dutch Language and Culture Classes in 2014.

Location: The Boardroom at Upper Gwynedd Township, Parkside Place, West Point, PA

The program runs in 8-week sessions on Thursday evenings, 7-9pm. Cost is \$119 per student.

The next session will begin March 20th through May 8th.

For information or to register: GlennAnne Chabala, Director of Parks and Recreation, Phone: 215-699-7777  
www.uppergwynedd.org



## 2014 Upcoming Events...

February 22: New Member Borrel

February 23: Wintersport Day

March: Annual Meeting

April: Koningindag

Go to [naadv.org](http://naadv.org) for event dates and details and watch for e-blasts.

## Stay Current...

[www.naadv.org](http://www.naadv.org): for all the latest events as well information about the club.

**Electronic mailing list:** enter your e-mail address on our website homepage for event info and announcements.

**Mail:** current members will receive mailings about upcoming events as well as the quarterly newsletter, De Brug.



"De Brug" is a newsletter for and by members of the NAADV • WINTER 2014 • [www.naadv.org](http://www.naadv.org)

## Catching up with the NAADV!

The final months of 2013 were busy for our Dutch club. In October we held our Annual "Golden Reunion" for the older members of the NAADV who may not always be able to attend our regular events. The luncheon, held at the Heerkens residence in St. Davids, was lively and fun as always with old friends catching up and reminiscing.



November brought us the Rijsttafel, held at Aqua in Philadelphia. We had a full house and full stomachs as everyone enjoyed the specialty dishes continuously coming out from the kitchen.



December, of course, was special because it was when Sinterklaas visited the children of the NAADV with special gifts for each of them. Again, we had a full house and many happy children enjoying the day. And, finally, we had our Holiday Borrel. This year we returned to Wayne at the Landmark Americana. It was a nice way to celebrate the holidays and end the year.

We are always looking for Brug contributors and welcome your stories, photos and ideas for the next newsletter. We also welcome guest editors so if you are interested please contact [info@naadv.org](mailto:info@naadv.org)!

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## Sylvain van Gobes

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of one of the NAADV's founding members. Since 1957, he has been an active member. We wish to dedicate this issue to the memory of Sylvain. He was a great friend and will be deeply missed.

He is survived by his wife Lee Pollock of Germantown, and his daughter, Michele van Gobes of Greensboro, North Carolina. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that contributions in Sylvain's honor be made to Germantown Monthly Meeting of Friends, 47 West Coulter Street, Philadelphia, Pa, 19144. A memorial service will take place there on April 26, 2014 at 2pm.

## Farewell to a Dear Friend...

With great sadness we received the news that on January 14th Sylvain van Gobes passed away in his sleep. Not only was Sylvain one of the founders of the NAADV, he has been active in the organization for more than 50 years. For his services to the Dutch he was knighted by the Queen of the Netherlands. Extraordinary because he was born and raised in Antwerp.

The Second World War ripped him away from his father and mother who perished in the camps. He and his brother joined the Merchant Marine as teenagers. He survived a U-Boat attack off the shores of Canada, that took his brother's life. He landed in the US where he joined the 84th Infantry Division and fought the Germans in the

infamous Battle of the Bulge where many of his brothers were left behind. Sylvain was heavily injured and returned to his newfound home, the United States where he spent more than 3 years in the hospital to recover. Here he met his first wife Anne, they married in 1949. They have one daughter, Michele.

The NAADV was founded when large groups of people from the former Dutch colony Indië (now Indonesia) arrived after the country became independent. These refugees needed to be housed and had to be provided jobs, not an easy challenge because the newcomers were considered "black." Sylvain did not shy away from the task and helped many of these newcomers

to find their way here. No wonder de rijsttafel has always been one of his favorite events. Sylvain's NAADV later on turned into a social club, there was Sinterklaas, there were pool parties, he even chartered an airplane once to take members back home to the Netherlands to meet their families.

Sylvain never wanted the limelight, but without him this organization would not be what it is today, a thriving association with many, what he would call, "happy time" events. We are deeply in debt to Sylvain, who has touched so many people. In our sadness we find consolation in knowing that he finally reunited with his parents and his brother.

– Gerald van Wilgen



I will miss Sylvain. He once gave me this photo of himself as a young boy - I don't even remember why - but, I loved it. In fact, it hangs in a frame in my house. He was always very special to me. I cannot think of someone more thoughtful or sweet. One December a very large box arrived. Inside was a gingerbread house. My young daughter was delighted but there was no return address or note so we had no idea who our secret Santa was. Months later Sylvain asked if we ever got the house. I was embarrassed since I never thanked him and explained why. He continued to send a house every year for years after that.

That's the kind of man he was. The impact he had on the NAADV cannot be exaggerated. I know many of you reading this may not have had the pleasure of meeting him since in past years he was not always able to attend many events, but believe me, he is the reason we still have such a vibrant club. Putting this Brug together has been hard since his contributions to this club were so great and no tribute will ever seem fitting enough. I just hope the words and photos on these pages and the website help to convey what he meant to all of us.

– Shelly Rabuse

A great friend will be missed! Sylvain started the Dutch Club in Philadelphia with a couple of friends. He loved the Dutch people [Sylvain was Belgian] and was grateful to the Dutch people because of their many brave attempts to save the Jewish people during the second World War. Sylvain had a great sense of humor and always saw the positive side to things. He had an incredible curiosity for intellectual pursuits and music. With his uncle he had a classical music company in Philadelphia, called Elkan Vogel, where I visited him many times. Sylvain was a great cook and also loved to eat good meals in good restaurants. He was a true connoisseur of the good things of life.

In retirement Sylvain was for many years Secretary of the NAADV. He had an office in The Germantown Friends Meetinghouse where he assisted Dutch people, knew of their whereabouts and was always willing to help. Sylvain to me was some kind of saint... The only thing he did wrong was his driving... I will miss Sylvain terribly... – Doortje Shover



Glenys and Sylvain at the NAADV 50th!

Sylvain was a cousin by marriage and we enjoyed Sylvain's company at many family occasions. It was he who inspired me to study Dutch: I was working on my degree in Germanic Languages at the University of Pennsylvania. Their requirement was two languages in addition to German (and English). Swedish and Dutch (taught at the time by former NAADV member Gertie Reichenbach) were offered. The obvious choice was Dutch and there was Sylvain - a willing language lab! I quickly joined what Sylvain usually called "the Dutch Club." Soon, he gently twisted my arm and I became editor of De Brug - for eight years. That was in the days before computers. When I had De Brug ready for publication, Sylvain would have it photocopied, and we'd spend a jolly evening trotting around the big kitchen table at Germantown Friends' Meeting collating and stapling it.

– Glenys A. Waldman

I have known Sylvain since the mid 70's when I started coming to the Netherland-America Association. He always had a kind word for me and my children and made us feel very welcome. When I started the Circle Dinners he was an eager participant, even hosting the dinner at his home where the table would be nicely set for the guests and he would cook his share of the meal. I was very pleased when he agreed to be videotaped to relate his experiences before, during and after World War II. The video went to the Library of Congress for the Veteran's History Project. It was amazing to hear his stories about the horrible things that happened to him and his family. On a lighter note, I wanted to add to Doortje's comment about his driving skills. His response to a remark that he did not wear glasses, not even for reading was that yes, he did not even need then to drive, and he could drive at night which made him very popular with the ladies.

– Carola (Carla) Struyk

Our acquaintance with Sylvain dates back to 1977 when we first read in the newspaper about a Dutchman Day to be held in the University Museum at Penn. We went there with our two young children and here was Sylvain, together with other active members, busily taking care of food and drinks for everybody. It opened a new door for us as we had not been aware of a Dutch organization in the Philadelphia area and our children had not known about any other Dutch speaking kids in this country. From then on we participated in all activities and Sylvain was always the constant presence. In the Germantown Meeting House the annual meetings were held with everybody bringing a potluck dish, Sinterklaas arrived there for the kids and Sylvain had his own office there so we considered it the headquarters of the NAADV for the longest time. We will miss him as the club won't be the same without him.

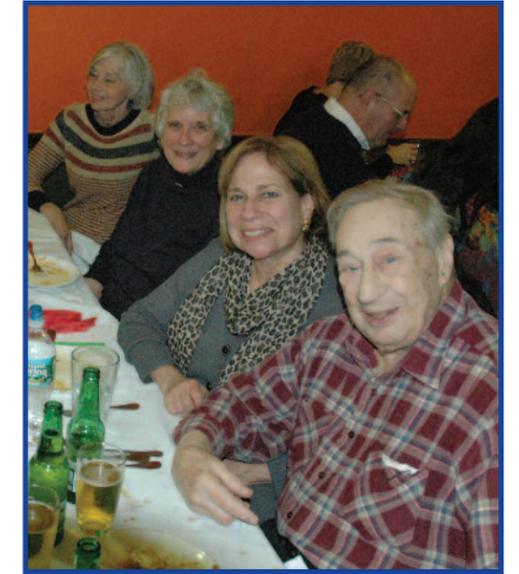
– Nell Daniels

There are not enough pages to represent how much Sylvain meant to everyone. Please visit our website [naadv.org/sylvain](http://naadv.org/sylvain) for more words, memories and photos.

To contribute your thoughts or photos of Sylvain, please email them to [poes@aol.com](mailto:poes@aol.com) for inclusion on the web page.



Early days of the NAADV



Sylvain at the Rijsttafel this past November.