



Telling the story of the Belgian Settlement in Wisconsin and working to preserve unique elements of Belgian culture

[www.BelgianHeritageCenter.org](http://www.BelgianHeritageCenter.org)

December 2019

## 2020 Events

26  
APR Booyah & Bread

28  
JUN Waffle Breakfast

16  
AUG Kermiss

03-04  
OCT Great Fire (Peshtigo) Remembrance

Watch for more events, as they are scheduled, such as the 3rd Annual Hunter's Raffle and a bluegrass concert. We are also planning a celebration of Flemish heritage along with a wooden shoe carving demonstration. Remember to check out and "Like" our Facebook page to learn about events and other BHC info.

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### Consider the Heritage Center for your Next Event

The Belgian Heritage Center is a perfect church-like setting for weddings and wakes/funerals. The BHC is also available for rental for private events such as meetings, conferences and family reunions. For more information call Sue Havel at 920-493-2789 or email: [events@belgianheritagecenter.org](mailto:events@belgianheritagecenter.org)

## Flemish Belgians

The Belgian settlement in this area is the largest community of descendants of Walloon Belgian immigrants in the United States. But the Belgian immigrants to this area were both Flemish and Walloon. What is the Flemish story? What does the Flemish language sound like? BHC is working on answering those questions in future exhibits. Do you have information about the Flemish you would like to share? If so, please contact us at [supportBHC@belgianheritagecenter.org](mailto:supportBHC@belgianheritagecenter.org). And, watch for more information about this project in the Spring.



# Events



Antique Power Equipment on Display



One of our booyah masters, Brian Delwiche, at the Kermis



The Mad Cats entertained with their usual excellence and energy at the Kermis!



A big crowd enjoyed the speakers, Cliff Christl, Packer historian, and Kevin Cullen, Deputy Director of the Neville Public Museum, at the Lambeau exhibit unveiling



Smokey Ridge Taxidermy displayed mounts at the Hunter's Raffle



Pam Alberts and Christine Chaudoir enjoy some delicious booyah at the Lambeau Exhibit unveiling



Bill Chaudoir, Joe Alexander, Barb (Englebert) Chisholm and Ann Jinkins show their Packer spirit



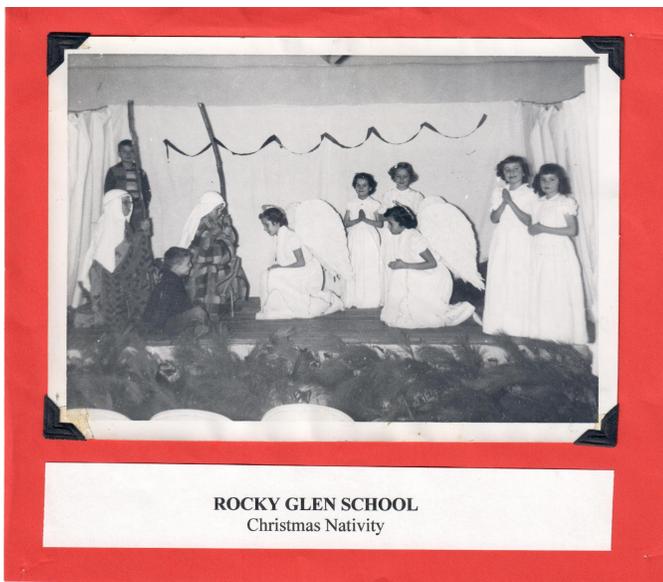
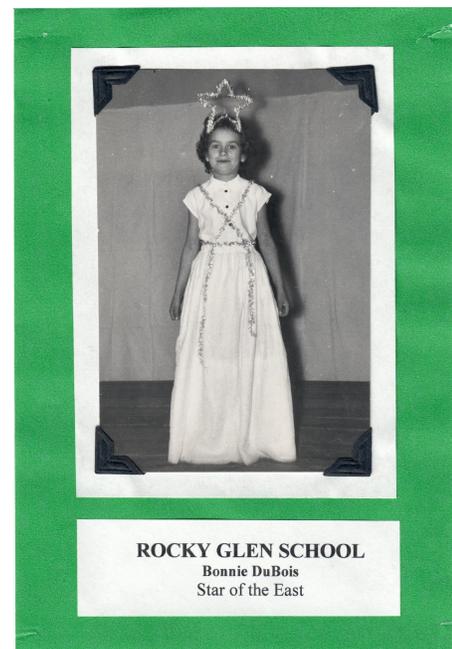
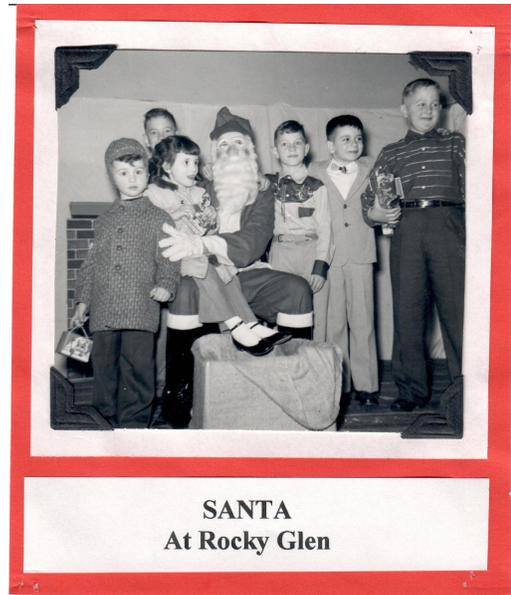
Joe Alexander, Belgian Heritage Center President, poses between Mark Wagner (L), former Packer Ticket Manager, and Sam Kluk @, Executive Director of the Packer Hall of Fame

# Christmas Programs were a Highlight of the Season

There was a time when all the country schools had Christmas programs. They were community events where people from the surrounding area as well as the students' families attended. They were usually held in the evening so that the many farming families could attend after chores. The last song would be *Here Comes Santa Claus* after which Santa would arrive and hand out bags of peanuts and hard candy.

Barb Chisholm shared her memories of Roosevelt School programs. "They would stop having formal classes the week before Thanksgiving and start preparing for the program. You would need to learn the parts for the skits, songs and poems followed by extensive rehearsals. Margaret Monfils would come and play the piano. Each family would be asked to donate a sheet which would be used for the curtains. My dad, along with other dads, would help assemble the makeshift stage and seating out of planks and cement blocks. It was a very exciting time because you might get new clothes and get out of the regular school work."

The era of the country school Christmas programs ended when schools were consolidated in the 1960s.



## Celebrate Christmas the Belgian Way at Historic Hazelwood

The Belgians are coming to the Hazelwood Historic House Museum in Green Bay, the first year for our ethnic group to join the museum's annual Holiday celebration. Each area of the historic Hazelwood mansion will be decorated and staffed by a different ethnic group, with our Belgian Heritage Center taking up residence in the entry foyer. Our Belgian Heritage Center (BHC) was able to draw from our rich heritage of both Walloon (French) and Flemish (Dutch) traditions in preparing a room in the 1837 Greek-revival style home. See some of our vintage décor pieces, learn about Belgian-American Christmas traditions and customs, and support the BHC.

Per Hazelwood's press release, "visitors can immerse themselves in the rich history of the holiday traditions of our local ethnic groups. Visitors will hear traditional stories, listen to songs, and perhaps meet a few Ethnic Holiday figures." Admission is \$6.00/adults; \$5.00/seniors 60+; \$4.00/kids (5-17). BCHS Members are Free. The event will take place on Saturday December 7<sup>th</sup> and Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup> from 11AM-7PM.

Historic Hazelwood, part of the Brown County Historical Society, is located at 1008 South Monroe Avenue, Green Bay, WI 54305. Free and easily accessible parking is available at Aldo Leopold Elementary School across the street.

### SHARE YOUR BELGIAN CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS WITH US!

We at the Belgian Heritage Center are always interested in learning more about how our fellow Belgian-Americans (and Belgians in Belgium) grew up celebrating the Christmas holiday. Do you remember visits from St. Nick? Have a special recipe your grandparents always made? Treasured decorations you use each year?

Follow us on Facebook or visit our website to upload and share your photographs and stories. We're always looking to expand our archive collection of historic photographs as well as select antique pieces to be preserved in our collection. If you have something you think may be of interest, please let us know. We're particularly interested in acquiring original Saint Nicholas masks/costumes for future re-enactments and events

**From all of us at the BHC,  
Joyeux Noel (French) / Djoyeus Noye (Walloon) /  
Vrolijk Kerstfeest (Flemish)!**



St Francis Church in Brussels at Christmastime 1974

## Dear Supporters,

This was another great year, not only for new events and more visitors, but for creating opportunities for the future. We are excited to announce the recent transfer of ownership of St. Mary's historic school/convent to BHC from the Peninsula Belgian American Club.

Starting in 1894, the St. Mary of the Snows campus included the church (which is now the Belgian Heritage Center) and the school/convent where Belgian children attended school taught by nuns who had a kitchen and dining room on the main floor as well as bedrooms on the second floor of the building. The "old school" later became the clubhouse for the Peninsula Belgian American Club. Their members have preserved the building for the last 55 years, but maintaining it is expensive. It is also a wonderful, historic building that both organizations would like to make accessible to the public. Transferring ownership allows BHC to use its fundraising organization and 501(c)(3) status to raise money to improve the "old school" and build on the good work done by the Belgian club for many years.



BHC and the Belgian Club are also working together to offer new programs for preserving and celebrating Belgian heritage and to raise funds to improve the school/convent. Planning will begin this winter and we hope to announce plans for improving our campus next year.

In 2019, BHC updated its strategic plan to help us plan and prioritize for the future. These are a few of the initiatives we will be emphasizing in 2020:

- Complete a campus master plan to improve layout and use of buildings and site
- Increase participation in educational programs about historic buildings to increase the number of buildings preserved
- Provide more information about Flemish Belgian heritage in BHC exhibits and interactives

If you are interested in participating in any of these initiatives or volunteering at any of our events, please contact us.

We sincerely appreciate the generosity of everyone who supported BHC this year – visitors, donors, event sponsors and especially our dedicated volunteers. We could not have accomplished so much great work without you. Thank you very much!

Handwritten signature of Joe Alexander in black ink.

Joe Alexander  
Co-Presidents

Handwritten signature of Monica Thiry in black ink.

Monica Thiry



BELGIAN HERITAGE CENTER

Thank you for your interest in Belgian Heritage!



Belgian Heritage Center  
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Brussels, WI 54204

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Checks may be made payable to the Namur Belgian Heritage Foundation, P.O. Box 173, Brussels, WI 54204.  
Donations can be made at [www.belgianheritagecenter.org](http://www.belgianheritagecenter.org) (major credit cards accepted).

- Please check if you **DO NOT** wish to be recognized in publications under the names provided above.

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