



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

www.BelgianHeritageCenter.org

December 2020

Christmas Gift Ideas



Please consider the Belgian Heritage Center website for Christmas gifts ideas. You will find small stocking stuffers such as ornaments with the Flemish and Walloon coat of arms as seen here, as well as an array of items including Belgian American themed apparel, flags, and other giftware. Check out the books and DVDs that feature the history of the Belgian settlement. Perfect for all of the people on your list who are proud of their Belgian heritage!

You can find the gift items at www.belgianheritagecenter.org. Click on the Merchandise tab and then View Merchandise Catalog.

For more information, call 920-825-7319.

Dear Supporters,

The Belgian Heritage Center's 10th year was quite different from the one we planned to mark this milestone. We especially hoped to increase visitors to our campus this year. So, when COVID meant supporters couldn't come to us, we adapted and found ways to bring Belgian heritage to you through more newsletters, an enhanced website and regular Facebook posts and live events. We are very pleased with the positive response! We are also glad that these efforts have resulted in more engagement with our cousins in Belgium.

We have already started planning for 2021 which will mark two significant anniversaries. It will be 150 years since the Great Fire and the devastation and rebuilding it brought to the Belgian settlement. It is also the 125th anniversary of the Norbertine Order of Priests in the United States, which started in 1891 when Father (later Abbot) Bernard Pennings arrived from Holland to serve at St. Mary of the Snows. We are busy planning to open the "old school" for more visitors with an improved visitor experience. More information will be provided in the next few months as planning progresses.

A heartfelt thank you to all who supported our efforts through donations, purchases, visits and volunteering. We are incredibly fortunate to have the ongoing support from so many people as well as the new supporters who have connected online. If you have already donated, please consider passing this newsletter and the donation form along to a friend or family member who may be interested in helping us all preserve Belgian heritage.

Thank you and Happy Holidays!

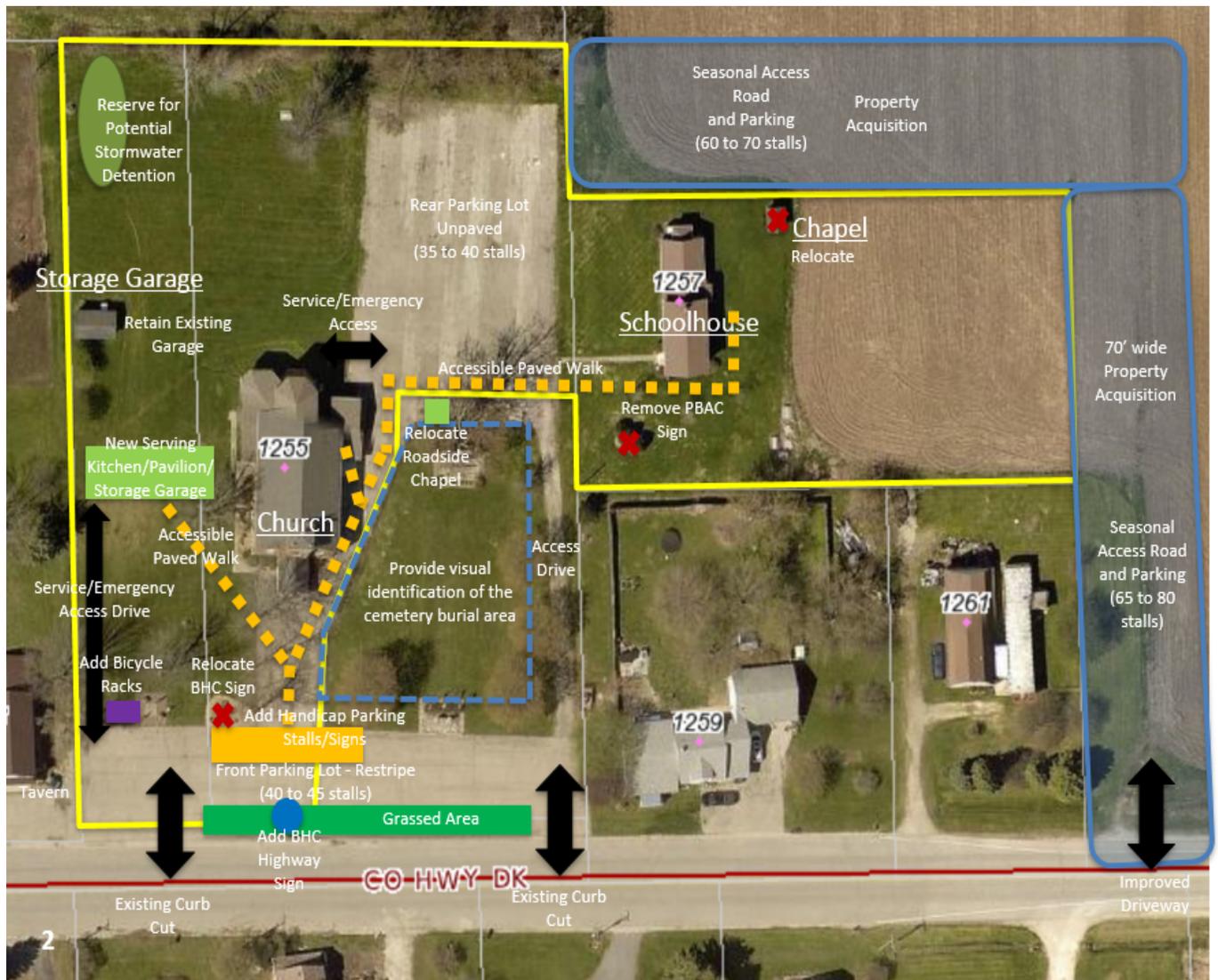
Joe Alexander
Co-Presidents

Monica Thiry

Campus Master Plan

BHC recently completed a Master Planning project funded by a grant from the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation. We engaged Hoffman Planning, Design & Construction, Inc. of Appleton to lead the effort to develop a roadmap for future development of the BHC campus. The Master Plan addresses improved visitor access to all buildings and campus features, expanded off road parking and a layout for a new, future building to support community events. The site plan and

development concepts are detailed in a 40 page document. The project also resulted in standards and guidelines for historic preservation of our buildings. In addition to a detailed policy statement, a 45 minute video was developed to provide detailed instructions for maintaining the historic aesthetics of our campus while safely hosting visitors of all ages. This plan will build our progress for many years to come.



St. Nick Memories



ST. NICK MASK WORN BY
LEMA (CHAUDOIR) LAMPEREUR

COURTESY OF THE
LEONARD LAMPEREUR FAMILY

Children in Belgium celebrate the feast day of St. Nick, December 6, including putting their shoes out the night before for St. Nick to leave little presents and sweets in and around them. This tradition was adopted in the new world throughout the Belgium settlement area.

In his book, *My Life Story – Memories and Anecdotes*, Julian Romuald, born in 1933, wrote, “December 5th is St. Nick night. All the

kids were told St. Nick would visit and they had to be good. St. Nick would leave candy and gum in their stockings which they hung up in the living room before going to bed. The next morning they all hurried to check their socks to find candy which they enjoyed. I hung up my home knit long red sock up too but all I ever got was a piece of charcoal. How the kids laughed.”

In past years, St. Nick’s day sometimes had a frightening aspect to it when adult relatives and friends dressed up in costume, sometimes with scary masks, to warn children to be good. Margaret Draize (1927-2004) in her book, *Belgian American Heritage – Customs and Cookbook*, writes, “I can remember as a child, Saint Nicholas eve as a scary time. Groups of costumed Saint Nicholases dressed more like Santas or in old grubby clothes and a Santa mask and cap would come to the homes. They knocked hard on the door and the adults in the family answered the door and let them in. Then in the house, sometimes they made us pray and before leaving they threw handfuls of peanuts all over the house. I was told that they were Saint Nicholas’ helpers, checking to find the good and bad children. Before going to bed we placed a bowl on the table. In the morning there would be cookies in the bowl (frosted sugar cookies) and maybe a bag of oranges as well as some nuts and candy. We would also find a treat in our desk at school.”

Many families continue to honor the tradition of St. Nick, although the frightening features have been abandoned. It is common for unsuspecting newcomers to the area to be surprised when their children come home from school and ask why St. Nick didn’t visit their house!

Coug nou

Do any of you remember waking up to homemade Coug nou on Christmas morning? In years past, this was a Christmas tradition in the Belgian settlement area. These pastries are made of sweet dough and shaped into rolls that resemble the swaddled baby Jesus. Coug nou, also known as Bread of Jesus, is still popular in Belgium and northern France to celebrate Christmas and St. Nickolas.

Here is a recipe from *Belgian American Heritage - Customs and Cookbook* by Margaret Draize.

¾ cup shortening
1 cup mashed potatoes
1 cup sugar
1 cup flour
Pinch of salt
1 cup milk
6 eggs
Small bar of yeast dissolved in ½ cup lukewarm water

Melt shortening, add mashed potatoes then the sugar and mix well. Then add flour, salt, milk, eggs and yeast. Knead into soft dough. Let rise until double, and then make balls about the size of an orange, shape into a Coug nou by twisting “heads” on each end. Place in a cake pan. Dip raisins in an egg yolk and push on the Coug nou for eyes and navel. Bake at 375 for 25 to 30 minutes or until brown.

Add glaze below (optional)
1 cup milk
½ cup sugar
2 tbsps butter
3 tbsps white syrup (like Karo)

Cook until it thickens, stirring constantly.



Coug nou made for Spirit of Christmas Past at Heritage Hill in 2019 by Betty Luk





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BELGIAN HERITAGE CENTER DONATION/PLEDGE FORM

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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 (major credit cards accepted).

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

Signature _____ **Date** _____

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