



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

www.BelgianHeritageCenter.org

June 2021

The Belgian Heritage Center is Open!

2021 Events

4
JUL

Booyah to Go

15
AUG

Belgian Heritage Center Kermis

8-10
OCT

The Great Fire Remembrance

Watch for more events, as they are scheduled. Remember to check out and "Like" our Facebook page to learn about events and other BHC info.

The Belgian Heritage Center is pleased to announce the 2021 opening season started Memorial Day weekend. Open hours continue to be Friday-Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit the St. Mary School/Convent, share a story or learn more about genealogy, and reflect at the St. Roch chapel. Visitors are requested to follow CDC guidelines.

Volunteers are still needed to serve as docents for occasional shifts. Training is provided. Please email supportBHC@BelgianHeritageCenter.org for more information and to volunteer.

We look forward to seeing you!

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. Traditional Belgian food and a Belgian heritage presentation are available on request. For more information call Sue Havel at 920-493-2789 or email: events@belgianheritagecenter.org



Schoolhouse Open to Visitors



In 2019, the St Mary School/Convent was transferred from the Peninsula Belgian-American Club to BHC with the goal of restoring the building and opening it to the public. Thanks to the hard work of BHC and PBAC volunteers, this historic building is now open to the public.

Restoration of the building is planned in two phases. The first was to recreate the 1900 era with furnishings, artifacts and information currently available. This is now open for visitors. By 2022, we hope to raise funds to add an ADA ramp.

The longer term restoration goal will involve more research to recreate the 1900 era appearance of the exterior of the building and the first floor interior including the classroom and kitchen. We also hope to recreate the historic bell tower. We are fundraising so we can retain professional assistance to develop an interpretive plan to guide our restoration efforts.

You can hear more about the restoration and some of the challenges we face on YouTube. Search for Door County History Preservation – Belgian Heritage Center Schoolhouse or go to this site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Ljt60os0CM>

Although the history of the school/convent is well documented, we are still looking for more details about the building and people connected to it. If you have photos, documents, artifacts or stories, we would love to hear from you. Please call 920-825-7319 or email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org.



Schoolhouse Circa 1900 (this was in the October 2020 newsletter)



Schoolhouse in 1914



Classroom as used by PBAC



Classroom first phase restoration

Thank you for your interest in Belgian Heritage!

Weddings



Hubert and Lema (Chaudoir) Lampereur Wedding, November 5, 1929
front row: Mildred (Chaudoir) Destree, Hubert, Lema, Florence (Jeanquart) DeDecker. Back row: Raymond Chaudoir, Laura (Lampereur) Phillips, Joseph Lampereur, Grace (Chaudoir) Lampereur, Blanche (Bader) Bouche, George Lampereur

Courtesy: Lema (Chaudoir) Lampereur



This wedding took place at St. Louis Church in Dyckesville in 1905. We would love to know who's wedding it was – can you help us?

Courtesy: Joyce Lampereur



Charles and Marie Therese (Thonne) Hoebreckx of Tonet married October 12, 1871

Courtesy: Ron Flemal



Harvey and Mae (Delebreau) LeFevre married on 1952 at St. Peter's Church, Lincoln

Courtesy: Harvey LeFevre

Theresa Alexander - Golden Heart Volunteer



The BHC recently nominated Theresa Alexander for the Golden Heart Volunteer Award in the Lifetime Volunteer category.

In the eleven years since the BHC was created, Theresa, along with her husband, Allen, has worked tirelessly in all aspects of the organization. When asked what excites her about the BHC, Theresa states she wants to keep the Belgian culture alive. She is deeply passionate about the Belgian history of this area. She enjoys speaking the Walloon language which she learned from living with her grandmother. Her grandmother, Henrietta Josephine Geniusse left Meux, Belgium to come to America in 1871 with her parents and siblings. Theresa would converse with grandmother and her friends in their native Walloon language. Theresa keeps the language alive through the BHC and other Walloon preservation projects.

Not only is Theresa fluent in Walloon, but she is also a wonderfully engaging storyteller. A favorite example is her telling of "Peter Rabbit" in Walloon. You do not need to understand the language to follow the story when Theresa tells it. Visitors love this. She has been interviewed for public media and has been videotaped for posterity as an educational component for the BHC.

She is just as engaging when talking about the old days. Visitors regularly comment about how much they enjoyed visiting BHC on days when Theresa and Allen worked as docents. She is an amazing source of historical information and knows many of the Belgian families in the area. She loves to assist visitors to the Center in locating their Belgian roots.

Theresa continues to help with the annual Kermis. She takes on the duty of creating jutt, including shopping for the food and preparing 12 to 18 large heads of cabbage. The jutt always sells out, even though she increases the amount every year! She also makes tortes and desserts for events.

Theresa considers her most important achievement raising five boys who were active in 4-H, wrestling, football, basketball, and track. She and Allen now enjoy five grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

True to her background as a teacher, Theresa takes every opportunity to share information and experiences. Her memory of past people, places, customs, and activities is invaluable as the BHC documents Belgian history so it can be shared for many more generations.



Events



Booyah to Go

We Appreciate Volunteers!

Thanks to all who volunteered at the recent **Booyah to Go** event where we sold 80 gallons of tasty booyah! The next **Booyah to Go** will take place on Sunday, July 4th.

Check our Facebook page and website for future events. Please join the festivities and consider volunteering at the Belgian Heritage Center by assisting with an event, serving on a committee or as a docent.

2021 Kermis

We are pleased to announce that the Belgian Heritage Center Kermis will be a live event on August 15. There will be traditional Belgian foods and beverages, including craft beer from the Thumbknuckle and Noble Roots breweries. The bucket raffle will be back in a slightly scaled back version to limit the crowd inside the BHC for everyone's safety. The popular Madcats will again be providing entertainment for a festive atmosphere. Mark your calendars and join us for a genuine, old fashioned Kermis!

The Great fire 150 Year Remembrance

This year will mark 150 years since the Great Fire of 1871 swept through the Belgian communities. We are planning special events to mark this solemn occasion and will provide more information in the coming weeks. BHC is also pleased to announce that we are producing a video to explain the causes of the fire, the immediate impact on the settlers and the transformation of the Belgian communities that occurred through rebuilding. We will make the video available free to schools and historical organizations to facilitate a better understanding of the role this devastating event played in our history.

If you have photos, oral histories or artifacts connected to the Great Fire that you would like to share, please contact us a contact@BelgianHeritageCenter.org.

We are extremely grateful for financial support of this project from an Anonymous donor and the following funds of the Door County Community Foundation: Carol Coryell Charitable Fund, Clifford and Clara Herlache Heritage Foundation and Kerley Family Foundation.

New!

Get a smart-looking convenient travel mug, available now at the BHC! The mug can hold 15 oz. and is good for both hot and cold beverages. \$20 and shipping is available.



We celebrate Fathers and all those who have been like a Father to us.

Our Belgian Fore Mothers



Eunice Hannon

Eunice Hannon was born November 30, 1909 to William and Mary (Collin) Hannon. She is a descendent of Jean François Hannon and his wife Jeanne Melanie Boucher, among the first Belgian immigrants to northeastern Wisconsin aboard the Quinnebaug in 1853.



Eunice embraced every opportunity to learn in order to achieve her goal to become a teacher. Eunice graduated from East High School in Green Bay in 1926. She was determined to attend the Oshkosh State Teacher's College but in September of 1926, she was stricken with infantile paralysis (polio). Undeterred, Eunice made arrangements to take courses through the University of Wisconsin Extension. During the years from 1926 to 1933 while fighting polio, she accumulated 61 credits of course work and in September of 1933, she was granted entry into the Oshkosh State Teacher's College with junior status. Eunice entered the University of Wisconsin at Madison for her senior year and completed her B.A. in education on June 26, 1935.

Eunice returned to the Champion area to live at the Hannon homestead and for the first two years of her teaching career served as Principal of Champion Graded School.

In the fall of 1937, she was hired by the school board and Principal George Gregor for \$800/year to teach at Luxemburg High School, then with an enrollment of 135 students. Both were criticized for hiring a "handicapped person" that many felt would be missing half the time. Miss Hannon dispelled all those fears and was feted at her retirement

party in 1975 for never having missed a single day throughout her entire teaching career. She encouraged her students to "cultivate the habit of getting the other person's point of view and the habit of being able to take criticism".

Always one to set an example of citizenship, in 1942 she organized a chapter of the high school student Victory Corps so they could learn about contribute to the war effort. In addition, she carried on her family tradition of serving and supporting the Robinsonville Presbyterian Church with her time, treasure and talent. She served for many years as the Sunday School Superintendent and was instrumental in coordinating and memorializing the 100th anniversary in 1961.

In 1975, at the age of 65, Eunice Hannon retired after teaching for 39 years. The community feted her at a celebration where students and community alike thanked her for her dedication and commitment to ensuring her students were proud and contributing members of society. Her tombstone in the Robinsonville Presbyterian Cemetery contains one final accolade.. "a beloved teacher".



photo and information provided by Donna Bultman

for more about Our Belgian Fore Mothers, visit the FEATURED tab at BelgianHeritageCenter.org

Speaker Series



PENINSULA BELGIAN AMERICAN CLUB

The Peninsula Belgian American Club meets the 3rd Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Belgian Heritage Center (1255 Cty Rd DK, Brussels, WI) in Namur, Wisconsin. A presentation takes place at each meeting. Membership is not required but encouraged.

June 17, 2021 IMMIGRANT TRUNKS Presented by **Dennis Jacobs**. Dennis is employed by Brown County Library's Local History and Genealogy Department. Much of his roots are Belgian. This presentation will enlighten the audience as to the difficult choices our ancestors had to make as to what they could take along to their new home.

July 15, 2021 BRUSSELS CEMETERY GROTTO Presented by **Fr. Edward Looney**, pastor of St. Frances & St. Mary Parish in Brussels, Wisconsin. Last year the Brussels Grotto (located adjacent to the church) celebrated its 85th anniversary. It features a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes. The Wisconsin Historical Society designated the grotto a historic site. For those interested, Father Looney will lead a short tour of the grotto at 6:15 p.m. at the Brussels church cemetery (9716 Cemetery Rd, Brussels, WI). From there we proceed to the Belgian Heritage Center a few miles away.

August 19, 2021 ORPHAN TRAIN **Don Youniss** has presented this program of a social experiment that transported children from crowded eastern cities to the country's Midwest for adoption. Wisconsin, being in the Midwest, was favored by the many of the child placing institutions due to the large number of families that had room to take a needy child into their home, with plenty of food from the farm for all. "The C. & N.W. train from the south early morning brought to Fort Howard about 30 orphaned children from the New York Orphan Asylum." Per September 21, 1893 - Green Bay Press Gazette

September 16, 2021 BELGIANS IN THE CIVIL WAR Presented by **John Mertens**, member of the Kewaunee County Historical Society Board of Directors. Not long after our ancestors arrived in Wisconsin they were faced with the American Civil War. A draft proceeded. Belgians felt unfairly targeted when in Door County 40 of the 63 drafted were Belgian.

October 21, 2021 SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF THE HOLY CROSS A video of the Community's history of 90 years of service at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help as well as many other places and ministries. **Sister Nancy Langlois**, will be the presenter.





Belgian Heritage Center
PO Box 173
Brussels, WI 54204

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** _____