



www.BelgianHeritageCenter.org

contact@belgianheritagecenter.org

920-825-7319

JULY 2025

BHC 2025 Event Calendar - Save the Dates!

17 AUG	Kermis
6 SEP	Grandparents Day / Bookmobile at BHC
4 OCT	Great Fire Remembrance at BHC
8 OCT	Great Fire Remembrance at National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion
10 OCT	Hunters Raffles via Facebook Live
21-22 NOV	Kewaunee Christkindlmarkt
28 NOV	Thanksgiving Sale / Family Glass Workshop
TBD DEC	Christmas Spirits Adult Glass Workshop

More events and speakers are being planned for 2025.
Please watch our newsletters, Facebook and
BelgianHeritageCenter.org for details.



BHC Joins Blue Star Museums Program

Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and museums across America to offer free admission to the nation's active duty military personnel including National Guard and Reserve and their families each summer. BHC joins over 2,000 participating museums recognizing the sacrifices of military members and their families. If you are a member of the military, please mention the Blue Star program upon arrival.

BHC for Private Events

BHC is a great place to host meetings, reunions, weddings, celebration of life and other private events. For more information call Julie at 920-619-6363 or email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org.

New Outdoor Exhibits!

BHC is pleased to announce the installation of four outdoor exhibits. The new exhibits will inform visitors about our rich Belgian history even when BHC is closed. Exhibits are scheduled for installation in July and are made possible by grants from Raibrook Foundation, Green Bay Packers Foundation, Maihaugen Foundation, Destination Door County Community Investment Fund, and the Clifford and Clara Herlache Heritage Foundation and Door County Historic Preservation Funds of the Door County Community Foundation. Stop in any time to see these wonderful additions to BHC's campus.

From Belgium to America



Why They Came

Tens of thousands of Belgians, many Belgians were struggling farmers and small merchants who wanted to own and work the land in America. That was not possible for them in Belgium.

Belgium's economy was in a state of decline in 1850 and after 1850, a time of famine. The first Belgian immigrants arrived in the area in 1853, reporting to their friends that a similar famine. However, they were greeted with a different fate, with work and other challenges that to be overcome, the Belgians persevered, adapting to the struggles of their new environment to build lasting communities.



"The 1850's in Wisconsin were a period of substantial work in clearing the fields and establishing agriculture, establishing their families, and fighting the elements of a very different environment than they had in Europe. We appreciate those struggles, and for many of us in Wisconsin, our ancestors went through the very same things. So the Belgian story is the story of all the immigrant groups that came here."

-Dr. William G. Ichniowski

Traveling

Getting to America meant a 50 day voyage by ship across the North Atlantic Ocean. Many Belgians traveled barefoot in swarms, lacking privacy and adequate food and water. Conditions were cramped and diseases ran rampant. Many did not survive the journey.

Upon arriving in Wisconsin, the Belgians had a chance encounter with E. J. Leclercq, a Belgian Crozier priest serving in Bay View. This meeting led the Belgians to make their new home nearby. They named their first settlement "Aux Promises Belges" - The First Belgians.

Finding Home

Soon many families arrived and settled in Wisconsin. The majority settled in portions of Southern Door County.



KERMISS TIME! - SUNDAY, AUGUST 17

Join us on Sunday, August 17, for our annual Kermis from 11:00 to 4:00 at the Belgian Heritage Center. The traditional harvest celebration will include:

- Live music from the popular band Shy Guys
- Historic farm implement display and demonstrations
- Tours of the restored school/convent
- Historical Exhibits and Displays
- Silent Auction and Raffles

There will be plenty of booyah, trippe, jutt, burgers, Belgian pies and tortes, and cold beverages including craft beers from Noble Roots and Thumb Knuckle breweries. Don't miss this great chance to experience Belgian tradition and reconnect with your Belgian roots!



*Delvaux Tavern,
Champion —
submitted by Della
(Dekaster) Clabots*

Do you have tavern photos?

Taverns were the center of Kermis celebrations, yet we have very few historic photos for BHC's archive. We loved these recent additions to our collection thanks to Mark Deterville and Mary Ann Thiry. All submissions are eligible for the 2025 History Contest.



Joe & Mary (Pirlot) Bouche, Sr. (left) and Jule & Leona (Joniaux) Dalebroux at the old Dalebroux Tavern in Thiry Daems



Unidentified tavern and bartender, possibly in the Sugar Bush area

RAFFLES - WIN BIG and SUPPORT BHC!

BHC's longstanding popular raffles are back, along with a few new opportunities to win big while supporting the BHC. Our raffle tent will be nearly double in size this year at our Kermis on August 17th. You'll find our famous Bucket Raffles, Silent Auctions, Fire Safe Mystery Treasure Raffle, and new-for-2025 Yeti Cooler Meat Raffle. Hunters Raffle tickets will also be available for purchase at the Kermis.

It's not too late to donate for any of those raffles, as we are still seeking gift certificates, cash prizes, gift baskets, sponsorships, or anything you'd like to share! We'd be happy to coordinate pick-up of any donations; however, they can also be mailed or dropped off during Center hours (Fri-Sun 10-3). All Kermis items should be received no later than Friday Aug 15th.

The BHC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Visit our website www.belgianheritagecenter.org and follow us on Facebook for more information about the Kermis and Hunter's Raffles.

KERMISS DAY RAFFLES - AUGUST 17

BUCKET RAFFLE: Our raffle tent will be nearly double in size this year. BHC is pleased to offer affordable bucket raffle tickets for nearly 100 impressive prizes. From unique gift baskets to replica tractors, gift certificates, wine tastings, beer, cheese, and event tickets, to one-of-a-kind handmade items--the Bucket Raffle is sure to please!

SILENT AUCTION: The Silent Auction will be bigger than ever with a mix of both high-end and budget-friendly options including: local sports memorabilia, custom artwork, yard art, baskets overflowing with goodies, and much more.

Tickets sold on the day of Kermis only.

HUNTERS RAFFLE

Our highly-anticipated Hunters Raffle tickets are on sale now. Tickets are packed with nearly \$15,000 in prizes! The limited number of tickets printed sell quickly, so be sure to get yours early! Tickets can be purchased at BHC, by contacting a BHC volunteer and at sales locations throughout Door, Brown, and Oconto counties. You can also email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org or visit belgianheritagecenter.org. Drawing will be October 10 on Facebook Live. Tickets are 1 for \$10, 3 for \$20 or 20 for \$100.



Here are just a few of the prizes:

- Weatherby Mark V Hunter 6.5 Creedmoor
- Christensen Arms Evoke 300 Win Mag
- Henry Brass Lever Action 45-70 Gov't
- Taurus M44 Stainless Revolver 44 Magnum
- Kimber Micro9 RTC 9mm Pistol Bundle
- Ruger American Heritage Red, White & Blue 17HMR
- Winchester XPR SR 308 Bolt Action
- Beretta APX A1 Full Size 9mm Pistol
- Savage Revel Classic 22LR Lever Action
- Winchester SXP Hybrid Woodland Camo 12-GA
- Tristar Cobra Camo DU Waterfowl 12-GA
- Yeti Tundra 35 Extreme Cooler

LIMITED TICKET/MAJOR PRIZE RAFFLES

MYSTERY TREASURE SAFE RAFFLE

This one was so popular in 2024 that we're bringing it back again! Buy a \$10 ticket for the chance to win a Winchester 20+ Gun Fire Safe filled with at least \$1,000 in treasures including: Firearms, Jewelry, Luxury and Leisure Gift Certificates, Hunters Raffle tickets, and more. The safe is not just for guns – it has a superior fire rating and is great for any valuables. Limited to 600 tickets. Winner gets the safe, the combination, and all the loot!



NEW for 2025--YETI COOLER MEAT RAFFLE! Buy your \$5 ticket for a chance to win a premium Yeti Roadie Cooler filled with local meat, with a total value of \$500. Limited to 500 tickets.



Tickets for both raffles are on sale now at BHC, though BHC volunteers or by emailing contact@belgianheritagecenter.org.

Winners will be announced at the Kermis. You do not need to be present to win.

Tickets for both raffles are on sale now!

New Remote Purchasing Option This Year

Mystery Safe, Hunter's Raffle, and Yeti Meat Cooler tickets can be purchased and delivered via email. Send your request for tickets to contact@belgianheritagecenter.org. All requests are processed as required by Wisconsin law; restrictions may apply.



Neville Public Museum Food/Culture Exhibit

BHC is working with the Neville Public Museum in Green Bay on a planned food culture exhibit for 2026. Generations of people in Northeast Wisconsin have preserved their food traditions, creating a food culture rooted in tradition, innovation, and community. Through historical artifacts, stories, and multimedia elements, the exhibit will highlight how food reflects the history and evolving communities of our region. From indigenous culinary traditions and agricultural heritage to the influence of immigrant communities, the exhibit will showcase how food has shaped and represents life in Northeast Wisconsin.

Belgian food culture will of course be included. The curators are looking for items made or used before 1950 including those listed below. BHC is also interested in adding these items to our collection.

- Handwritten recipe cards for traditional Belgian food.
- Photos of baking, cooking, rendering lard, butchering, canning, growing food, churning butter, making tripe, etc.
- Photos inside a typical kitchen or summer kitchen, especially cook stoves, bake ovens, cooking over open fire, etc.



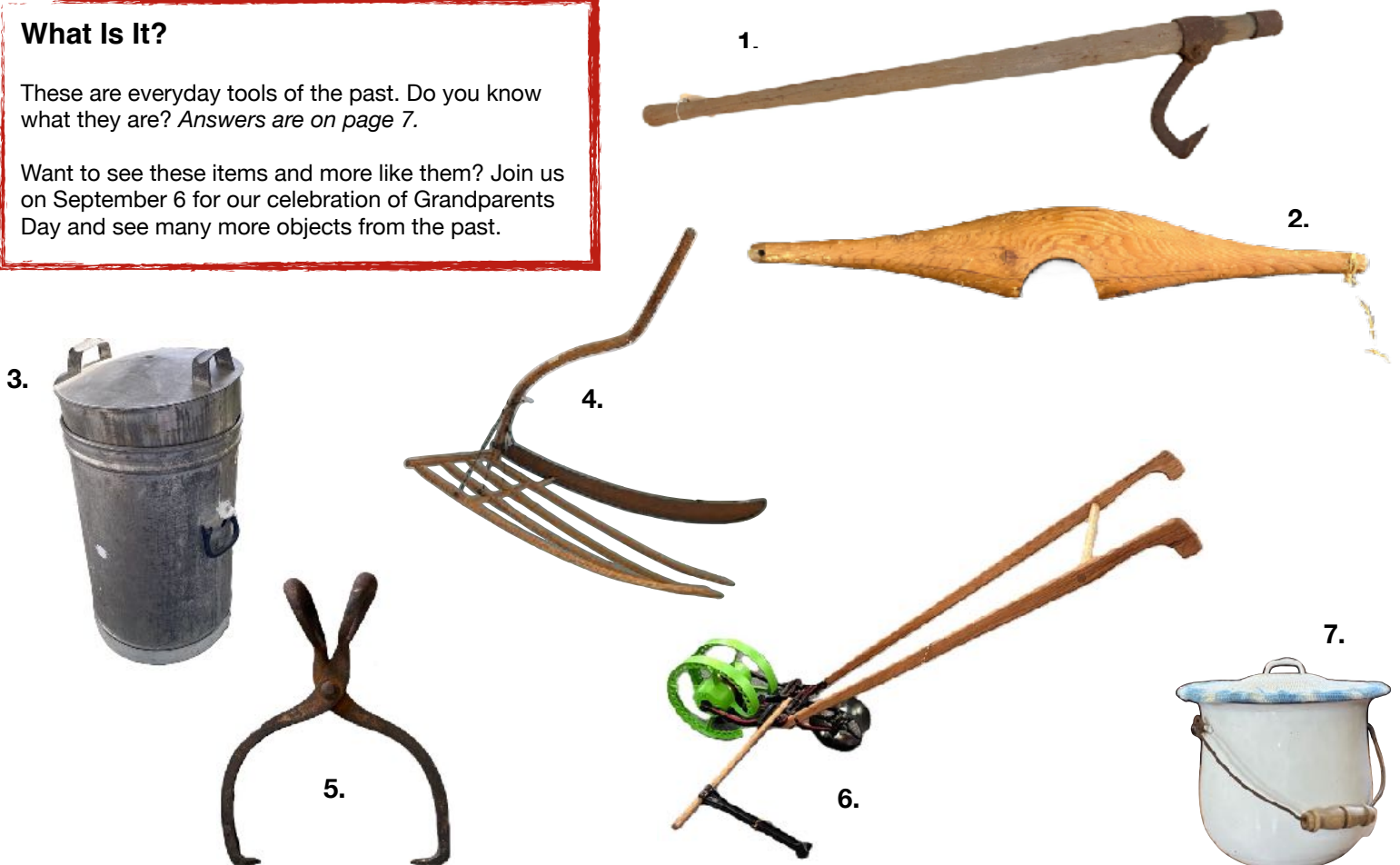
Anna Derenne (1870-1957) cooked for the priests at St. Martin's in Tonet and St. Mary of the Snows in Namur

If you have any of these items, please contact Ann at 920-743-1189 or email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org. All submissions will be eligible for BHC's 2025 history contest.

What Is It?

These are everyday tools of the past. Do you know what they are? *Answers are on page 7.*

Want to see these items and more like them? Join us on September 6 for our celebration of Grandparents Day and see many more objects from the past.



Grandparents Day at BHC – September 6, 2025

BHC is hosting a very special Grandparents Day Event on Saturday, September 6, from 10:00 until 2:00. For our Belgian heritage to survive and remain relevant, it needs to be passed on to next generations. This event will help Grandparents (and parents) expose children to our history in a variety of ways. Displays and resources will help you:

- Find Family Photos – learn how you can use BHC's photo collection to see your ancestors of long ago and how they lived and worked.
- Build Your Family Tree – learn to use online resources to explore your family tree and learn when and where your ancestors were born, married, immigrated and buried.
- Learn and Share Your Family Story – pick up a list of interview questions designed to help grandparents share what life was like generations ago.
- Make Your Own Family Book – see examples of how others compiled their stories and photos. It's easier than you think!
- See How Your Ancestors Lived – see farm tools, household items, shoes, furnishings and more dating back to the 1850's. Tour the restored 1894 school to see how children learned. Visit St Roch Roadside Chapel to see how people prayed.



5 Generations – Fleurie Gigot Jandrin holding Peter Theys, Jr.; standing from left, Mabel Bouillion Theys, Mary Devos Bouillion, Mary Jandrin Devos



- Watch Oral Histories – see our collection of stories told in English and Walloon about the early days of the Belgian settlements.
- Visit the Bookmobile – the restored Bookmobile will be on site from 10:00 to 1:00. See how rural communities used this library on wheels and the books they read decades ago.

BHC volunteers will share information in each of these areas to show you the many ways you can preserve your own family history. And, we hope you will share your stories with BHC. **An anonymous donor is sponsoring a \$100 cash prize to the best youth submissions** in 7-12 and 13-17 age groups for photos, stories, videos, family trees or other creative work submitted by December 1. Adult entries are eligible for BHC's 2025 History Contest.

Walloon Preservation Project Update

BHC is pleased to announce a new project to preserve the Walloon language. Balance Digital Media Studios of DePere has been engaged to help us launch our very own "Wisconsin Walloon" website. It will teach people to understand Walloon and to use words and phrases, as well as reconnect us with words and phrases we heard growing up. The website will consist of three main content areas:

- How Walloon got to Wisconsin and the role it plays in Belgian heritage.
- Short video lessons teaching groups of related words and phrases.
- Oral Histories will allow listeners to hear the language in conversation and compare a story told in English with the same story in Walloon. We want to include YOUR stories about the role Walloon played in your family.

The website will be an ongoing source of new stories and lessons added on a regular basis.

Some of you may remember that BHC was involved in a different Walloon language teaching tool. That project no longer involves BHC, so we shifted our focus to a different way to preserve the language. We are very excited about this new approach and look forward to releasing the new website by the end of the year.

Funds donated previously for Walloon Preservation will cover a majority of the cost, but additional funds will be needed. All donors contributing to the project (previously and in the future) will be recognized on the new website. If you are interested in supporting this project with a donation or story, please call Sandy at 920-493-2850 or email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org.



From Belgium to Wisconsin – Part One

By Lou Ann M. Novak

Note: This is a two-part account of the first Belgian settlers in Wisconsin. Part One describes the voyage from Antwerp to Wisconsin. Part Two describes finding the land for new homes in America.

1853 was a tough year for the rural canton of Grez-Doiceau, in the Belgian province of Walloon Brabant.

Farmers were frustrated. Farms had been divided so many times that few families had enough land to support themselves. There were frequent potato and grain crop failures.

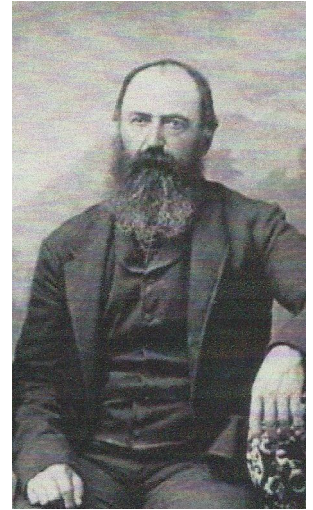
Small farmers had cottage industries such as spinning, weaving, straw plaiting and nail making to supplement their income. Now factories were putting out less expensive manufactured goods and the cottage industries were dying.

In March 1853, François Petiniot made a trip from Grez-Doiceau to Antwerp. There he found a Dutch pamphlet describing fertile land being sold in America for only \$1.25 per acre. He brought the pamphlet home and soon talk of emigration spread throughout the canton.

Could they trust the information in the pamphlet, or was it a scam?

Eventually some decided to take the risk. The families of François Petiniot, Jean Martin, Philip Hannon, Joseph Moreau, Etienne Detienne, Adrian Masy (Massey), Lambert Bodart, Joseph Jossart, Martin Paque and Jean Baptiste Detienne prepared to leave.

The families packed clothing, utensils and bedding to take with them. They sold their land, animals and other personal property. They said goodbye to friends and relatives, planning never to return.



François Petiniot



Port of Antwerp in the 1800's; credit: Monovisions.com

The group purchased passage on an older three-masted schooner, The Quinnebaug, which sailed from Antwerp to New York on May 17, 1853. The ticket price was 185 francs for each adult. Passengers ranged in age from a few months to 63 years of age.

The sea voyage was expected to take five to six weeks. Conditions on board were crowded and harsh. Food was limited and of poor quality. Drinking water was red and brackish. Good drinking water on deck was reserved for the crew, and if a child dared to touch it, he was beaten.

Some families were indeed scammed. They were shorted on services they had paid for in advance, such as lodging in Antwerp or food purchased by the agents to be placed on board for their use. Numerous reports were made against one agent named Adolphus Strauss, particularly mentioning the poor quality and shortages of food, as well as undrinkable water.

According to a complaint recorded at the Belgium Consulate, the Martin Paque family was so shorted by Strauss that Paque paid a silver coin to the ship's cook to sell him scraps from the Captain's table. Paque spent 25 extra francs in this way, and yet his family became so weak they could barely walk.

For most passengers, this was their first sea voyage. The passage was beset with a succession of violent storms, including one that snapped off the ship's main mast and carried it away. The ship continued ever westward for seven weeks. During the seventh week the passengers ran out of food and drinking water.

The Quinnebaug reached New York on July 5, 1853 after a 49-day voyage. Immigrants arriving in New York disembarked at the wharves in Manhattan. Now what?

The ten Belgian families had no specific destination in mind when they left Antwerp, but on board ship they met some Dutch families and decided to journey with the Hollanders to a wilderness called Wisconsin. They soon learned the inland leg of their journey from New York would add three weeks of travel and cost an additional 100 to 150 francs.

The group took the most economical route, traveling first from New York to Albany. They went west on the Albany-Buffalo Road, crossed Lake Erie to Detroit by lake steamer, and boarded a train to the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. Crossing Lake Michigan to Milwaukee involved a second lake steamer.

Soon the families regrouped in Milwaukee. After a short rest, they began to search for the new lands they would call home.

- Continued in Part Two, next edition -



The Peninsula Belgian-American Club (PBAC) was formed in 1964 and has been promoting Belgian heritage and fellowship for over 50 years. The “Belgian Club”, as it is often called, laid the foundation for the Belgian Heritage Center and has been a great supporter, but it is actually a separate organization.

PBAC’s focus is on member activities, encouraging communication and exchanges among descendants of the Belgian immigrants to northeast Wisconsin. Not only do they facilitate relationships with local Belgians, their connections include many of our distant cousins in Belgium. Their partnership with Wallonie-Wisconsin, a sister club in Belgium, also goes back 50 years and has resulted in exchange visits between the two countries that continue to this day.

PBAC is made up of members who pay dues. It is a social group that has meetings, speakers, social events, and plans trips with Wallonie-Wisconsin. PBAC members also receive \$5 off BHC merchandise one time per year. Membership dues are just \$10 a year and includes additional email news. This is a great deal! If you are interested in joining PBAC, please contact Gary Vandenhouten at garyvandenhouten1947@gmail.com.

Though we work together to promote Belgian history, PBAC and BHC are separate organizations. Please contact us if you have questions about how to donate or get involved.

St. Mary of the Snows Historic Cemetery Burials - Update

Our March 2025 newsletter reported on our efforts to identify those buried in the historic cemetery adjacent to BHC for inclusion in a new outdoor exhibit. Thank you to everyone who contacted us. We recently learned of additional sources of burial information that still need research. As we continue our efforts, we welcome any additional information you may have about burials in the cemetery between 1860-1911.

Through our research, we learned that the first burial in the “new” St. Mary of the Snows Cemetery on Pit Road was Felicie “Lucy” Delwiche born August 16, 1848 in Saint Denis in Namur province in Belgium. She came to the US in 1856 and married Eugene Lampereur in 1866. After Eugene died in 1889, she married Justin Chaudoir in 1896. Both of her husbands are buried in the old cemetery. The record of her burial on April 22, 1911 was found in the interment record book at St. Francis Xavier Church in Brussels.



Key: What Is It?

1. Cant hook used to handle logs
2. Human yoke used for carrying water; placed across the shoulders with water pails hung on each end
3. Milk can used to transport milk to the cheese factory
4. Hay rake and sickle
5. Ice hook used for handling blocks of ice
6. Combination drill, wheel hoe, cultivator, rake and plow (with attachments)
7. Chamber pot with crocheted lid cover used to avoid trips to the outhouse during the night

Help Us Manage Newsletter Cost

If you would like to save the cost to BHC to print and mail your newsletter, we will send it to you via email or you can see the content on our Facebook page. If you are interested, please email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org or contact us through Facebook. Donations to offset the cost of newsletter production and delivery (\$10 per year per person) are greatly appreciated.

Belgian Heritage Center Donation Form

Name: _____ Donation: \$ _____
Street: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please make checks payable to: Belgian Heritage Center, P.O. Box 173, Brussels, WI 54204. Donations may be made at www.belgianheritagecenter.org (PayPal and major credit cards accepted).

Namur Belgian Heritage Foundation, owner of the Belgian Heritage Center, is a 501(c)(3) organization



Belgian Heritage Center
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St. Roch Roadside Chapel Restoration

St Roch Chapel was built in 1915 in Brussels by the Jadin family and later moved to the grounds of the Belgian Heritage Center. It was recently restored with a new roof, siding and original paint color. Construction provided by: Buhr Construction. Painted by: BHC Volunteers and Southern Door High School Students. Financial support provided by Arlin Monfils, Christine DeSmet, Nick & Kay Moore, Gary Alexander, and In Loving Memory of Lil Zwicky.

Thank you to everyone who
contributed!

