



www.BelgianHeritageCenter.org

contact@belgianheritagecenter.org

920-825-7319

SEPTEMBER

BHC 2025 Event Calendar - Save the Dates!

27 SEP	Sharing Your Life Stories presented by Write On, Door County
4 OCT	Great Fire Remembrance at BHC
8 OCT	Great Fire Remembrance at National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion
10 OCT	Hunter's Raffle via Facebook Live
25 OCT	Wooden Shoe Making Demonstration
8 NOV	Veterans Day Special Event / Louise Endres Moore, author of "Alfred"
21-22 NOV	Kewaunee Christkindlmarkt
28 NOV	Thanksgiving Sale / Family Glass Workshop
6 DEC	Christmas Spirits Adult Glass Workshop

Booyah-To-Go — September 21

Enjoy BHC's award winning booyah on Sunday, September 21. Booyah will be available for take-out only from 10:30 until 3:00 or while it lasts. Booyah is \$10 per quart and comes in BHC provided containers. Pre-orders are strongly encouraged and prepayment options are available. Exact cash at pick-up is much appreciated! To pre-order, call 920-825-7319 or email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org.

Hunter's Raffle Tickets — October 10

BHC's incredible Hunter's Raffle will take place on October 10 at 1:00 via Facebook Live. Tickets packed with nearly \$15,000 in prizes are still available. Prizes cover a wide range of great items for the outdoor lover including guns, crossbow, Yeti cooler, binoculars, a variety of gift cards and much more. The limited number of tickets printed give you great odds for winning one of over 40 prizes to be raffled. They sell quickly, so get yours now!

Tickets can be purchased at BHC, Steel Wheel in Namur, through BHC volunteers and at sales locations throughout Door, Brown, and Oconto counties.

New this year - 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. You do not need to be present to win.

Please watch our newsletters, Facebook and BelgianHeritageCenter.org for details.

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.

BELGIAN HERITAGE CENTER HUNTER'S RAFFLE \$10 EACH 3 FOR \$20 OR 20 FOR \$100

DRAWING FRIDAY, OCT. 10TH, 2025 VIA BHC FACEBOOK LIVE • 1255 COUNTY DK, BRUSSELS, WI 54204

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|--|---|
| 1 st - Weatherby Mark V Hunter 6.5 Creed (Peters Concrete) | 18 th - Killer Instinct Temp-X 405FPS Crossbow (Garen DeClark Plumbing) |
| 2 nd - Henry Brass .45 - 70 Side Gate (Jeff LeGrave/Bruce Alberts) | 19 th - Rossi Brawler US Flag 45 Colt/410 Handgun (Dan & Michelle Lodahl) |
| 3 rd - Taurus Raging Hunter 2-Tone 44 Mag (Dan & Michelle Lodahl) | 20 th - Yeti Tundra 35 Cooler (J. Jadin Inc) |
| 4 th - Christensen Arms Evoke .300 Win Mag (JJ Excavating/Jason Jeanquart) | 21 st - Yeti Hopper Soft Cooler (Alberts Plastering) |
| 5 th - Kimber Micro9 RTC 9mm Bundle (Buhr Construction) | 22 nd - Iver Johnson Hardwood 410 Shotgun (Tony Lischka & Tina Jadin) |
| 6 th - Taurus M44 Stainless 44 Mag (Kevin & Amy Moore/Kelly & Jo Chaudoin) | 23 rd - H&R Pardner Synthetic 12-GA Pump (Anonymous Donor) |
| 7 th - Winchester XPR Suppressor Ready .308 (Theresa Alexander Family) | 24 th - Ruger Air Hawk .177 Scoped Air Rifle (Rich Price) |
| 8 th - Ruger American Predator .22-250 (Anonymous Donor) | 25 th - Leupold BX-1 Binoculars (Tisch Mills Farm Center) |
| 9 th - Ruger American Heartland .17 HMR (Hannmann Milling) | 26 th - Whitetail Feed Package (Rio Creek Feed Mill) |
| 10 th - Beretta APX A1 9MM Pistol (Massart Electric) | 27 th - \$100 Cabelas Gift Card (Mike Pribyl / LG Seeds) |
| 11 th - Savage Axis XP Camo Scoped .270 Win (Kristin Alberts & Kevin Schneider) | 28 th - \$100 Gift Card (John & Shelly Willems) |
| 12 th - Rock Island 1911 USGI 45ACP (Dan & Michelle Lodahl) | 29 th - Hunter's Prize Package (Rocky Ridge Shooter's Supply) |
| 13 th - TriStar Cobra III Walnut 410 (Tim Baudhuin Farms) | 30 th - 31* - \$75 LP Tank + Fill GC (Milton Propane) |
| 14 th - Savage Revel Classic 22LR Lever (Badger Tiling) | 32 nd - \$50 Marchants Meats GC (Marchants Meats & Sausage - Sturgeon Bay) |
| 15 th - Winchester SXP Hybrid Woodland 12-GA (Portside Builders) | 33 rd - \$50 Tractor Supply GC (Tractor Supply) |
| 16 th - S&W SD9 Two-Tone 9mm Pistol (Dan & Michelle Lodahl) | 34 th - \$50 Charapata GC (Charapata Seed Sales) |
| 17 th - TriStar Cobra DU Camo 12-GA (Travis Price Masonry & Plastering) | |

LIMITED NUMBER OF TICKETS

NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN!

MORE PRIZES TO BE ADDED!

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Write On, Door County Presents Sharing Your Life Stories At BHC — September 27



- ◆ Have you thought about writing down some of the stories from your life to share with other family members, but don't know where to begin?
- ◆ Are you curious about the stories of your grandparents' lives?
- ◆ Would you like to share the stories passed down to you?

BHC is pleased to welcome Write On, Door County to lead this free and very informal session designed to help you get started recording those stories you want to pass on to future generations. All ages are welcome and family groups are encouraged! Facilitators will offer prompts and questions to help you remember events from the past or the present and put them to page.

The session will be led by Sharon Auberle and Shaun Melarvie, who facilitate Write On's Memoir Monday program at Hope Church, the fourth Monday of the month. A poet and photographer, Sharon served as Door County Poet Laureate 2017-2019. A semi-retired general surgeon, Shaun is using his new free time to write a novel.

Sharing Your Life Stories is presented in collaboration with Write On, Door County. The session is open to everyone. Admission is free. We especially encourage participation by young people who want to learn and share the stories of their ancestors.

Share your stories with BHC and be eligible for our 2025 History Contests. A \$100 cash prize is available 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.

Entries can be submitted by:

- Drop off at BHC (Friday through Sunday from 10:00 to 3:00 until October 26)
- Mail to Belgian Heritage Center, PO Box 173, Brussels, WI 54204
- Email to contact@belgianheritagecenter.org

Please call 920-493-2850 or email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org for assistance before sending large files or if you would like original documents returned.

Harvesting and Fall Field Work

Modern farms have huge equipment often with air conditioning, GPS and other conveniences that make the harvest and fall fieldwork a lot easier than it used to be. Imagine farming when horse power came from animals, not engines, and large fields were worked a few feet at a time. Horses were used well into the 1940's until US production capacity supporting the war effort could return to domestic advancement.



Pierre Farm — Brussels

Gus DeBroux — Gardner



Francis Chaudoir, Namur



Marie Derenne and Annie (Jandrin)
Derenne, Lincoln.



Eli Dart Plowing — Sugarbush



Erwin Delarwelle — Duvall



Jule Fameree farm — Red River



Mrs. Frank Martin wearing traditional wooden shoes

Wooden Shoemaking in the Belgian Settlements

Many of us may have grown up hearing stories from our ancestors about arriving in the new world wearing wooden shoes. There may have been an old pair of shoes at grandma's house that we clomped around in for fun. Or maybe there were some old tools out in the barn that we were told were for shoe making. Walloon and Flemish immigrants wore their wooden shoes to protect their feet as they went about their daily tasks in logging and farming.

The Walloon Belgians normally called wooden shoes "sabot", the French word for shoes; they were sometimes called "soulier" in French and "sole" in Walloon. The Flemish called them klompen; Flemish dancers were called "klompers." The wooden shoes were part of everyday life and some ancestors learned the craft of creating a shoe from a block of wood back in the old country.

You may be familiar with an area in the Town of Union called Shoemaker Point. In the book, *Our Marchant Relatives*, Jeanne and Les Rentmeester share this story of the Renards.

"Lambert Renard came to America with this brother, Francois Renard and family, in 1857, after a voyage that took eight long weeks on a sailing vessel. Both brothers were shoemakers. The Francois Renard family went to a Belgian settlement in Illinois, while bachelor Lambert went to the Town of Union, where he was shortly joined by Francois."



Shoemaker Point in the Town of Union 1899. St. Mary's (now BHC) is to the east (top right).



Shoemakers worked in both wood and leather in the Belgian settlements.

Leather shoes were a luxury in Belgium at that time, to be used for special occasions. In Wisconsin, the abundance of rawhide and tan-bark made leather shoes more affordable, but it was some time before wooden shoes were no longer everyday footwear.

To make wooden shoes, the Renards selected willow or poplar limbs about 10 inches in circumference, which were free of knots and branches. The limbs were cut in half, each half to be used to make one shoe. With special tools the soft wood was cut away to fit the foot, then the outside was cut away until the desired length was reached. It would take experienced shoemakers, such as the Renards, about two hours to complete a pair. Wooden shoes were cleaned by shaving off the dirty part. In the Winter, strips of cloth were tacked to the shoes and then wound around the legs."

You can see several wooden shoes and shoemaking tools at the Belgian Heritage Center generously donated to preserve this important part of our history. Those artifacts will be on display on the last regular Friday – Sunday open weekend of October 24-26, 2025.



Traditional Wooden Shoe Carving Demonstration – October 25

BHC will host Luke Traver from Luke's Lost Arts who will present the art of wooden shoemaking, explaining the process as he manually carves a pair of wooden shoes. Luke will demonstrate the carving techniques he learned as an apprentice to the late Master Shoe Carver Bob Siegel, Jr. (Sieg). In 2006, Luke began actively carving under Sieg's watchful eye at area shows and festivals. In 2011 he finished a one-year apprenticeship program with Sieg that was supported by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts. Sieg retired from active carving in 2014 at the age of 89 leaving Luke to carry on the mission to preserve this lost art for generations. He uses

only three primitive handmade tools and a wood vice. His programs are enhanced with history discussions followed by a question and answer session with those in attendance.

Come join us on October 25 from 10:00-noon to see Luke in action, see the wooden shoe artifacts, and share any stories, pictures, or artifacts you may have about wooden shoemakers in our collective Belgian heritage.

For more about Luke's Lost Arts visit his website at <https://lukeslostarts.com/wooden-shoes/>



Luke Traver

From Belgium to Wisconsin – Part Two

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.

At this point in our story, our Belgian travelers have reached Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1853 Milwaukee had a population of about 25,000, making it about one-fourth of the size of 1853 Antwerp.

After a short period of rest in Milwaukee, the Belgians followed the Hollanders who were traveling to established settlements near Sheboygan. Wanting to conserve money for land purchases and homesteads, the Belgians traveled the last 59 miles on foot, carrying their small children and dragging their baggage behind them.

The Belgians soon realized they had underestimated the language barriers. They heard German in Milwaukee and Dutch in Sheboygan, but they were unable to speak in either language. In addition, the best land in those areas had already been purchased.

Fortunately, they learned from a French-Canadian trapper that nearly half the population in Green Bay spoke French, a language quite comfortable for the travelers. They took passage on a lake steamer to Green Bay, arriving in late August.

The men temporarily settled their families in Green Bay while they searched for land. They decided to settle along the Fox River near Kaukauna. They made land purchase deposits at the land office in Menasha, then returned to Green Bay to fetch their families.

But a big change was in store. Upon returning to Green Bay, they found that a small child of Phillip Hannon, probably Marie Barbe, had died. The departure of the group was delayed for the funeral. On the day of the funeral, the officiating priest was visited by his friend, Father Edward Daems, pastor of Bay Settlement, some ten miles northeast of Green Bay. Father Daems was also Belgian and immediately began to offer advice to his former countrymen.

The priest told the settlers the soil in Bay Settlement was unsurpassed. He volunteered to go with them and find them good places to settle. In addition, he promised to conduct mass and the sacraments in their own language. The families decided to forfeit the Kaukauna land and go to Bay Settlement instead.

After the funeral, the settlers proceeded from Green Bay to Bay Settlement on foot. Once again, the men set out to look for favorable farm land. Eventually they selected lands near the county lines of Brown and Keweenaw Counties in the area now known as Robinsonville/Champion. They returned to Bay Settlement and registered the land with a government agent.

For the most part, the forest land the Belgians purchased uninhabited. Twenty years before, the Menominee, Ojibwa and Potawatomi peoples in the area had been force relocated to lands west of the Mississippi River. Nonetheless, isolated pockets of Native Americans remained.

Relationships between the Indians and the Belgians were cordial. In time the Indians would teach the immigrants many survival skills such as trapping wild animals, smoking meat, ice fishing and making maple syrup. Indian women taught Belgian women to pick blackberries, and they would make the long trek to Green Bay to sell their berries together.

But in order to survive, the Belgians first needed to build shelter. Simple lean-tos or huts were constructed, but these offered little protection. To protect against wild animals and Wisconsin winters, the settlers began building log cabins.

As soon as possible, the Belgians cleared land for cultivation, often felling trees five or more feet in diameter. Once they downed a tree, they had no way to move it so they burned it where it fell. Seed was planted in little patches of cleared land. Sometimes the men would walk to Green Bay or Milwaukee seeking work. Women and children were left for weeks and months at a time to tend the little farms, contending with loneliness and fear.

This first settlement was called Grez-Daems from 1853 to 1862, and in 1862 it was renamed Aux Premiers Belges (The First Belgians).

As difficult as life was, letters home glowed with the promise of the new land. More and more people from Brabant decided to follow the trail of these pioneers. It is estimated that from 1853 to 1857, between 5,000 and 7,000 emigrants left Belgium bound for America. Xavier Martin, upon reaching Wisconsin in 1857, estimated that there were 15,000 Belgians living there. Modern historians believe the number of 10,000 to be more accurate.

With so many Belgians living in close proximity, the immigrants were able to retain their distinct Walloon language, cuisine and culture. Through courage and sweat equity, the early settlers succeeded in preserving a Belgian rural village lifestyle for themselves and future generations.

"We live in a very fertile country and the harvest is tremendously good. Dear brother...I am happier than most farmers in your area. Most of all, what is the biggest thing of all, I am independent!"

- Charles Lhost to his brother in Belgium, 1857

Great Fire Remembrance — October 4

Over 150 years ago, one of the most destructive natural disasters in U.S. history tore through Northeast Wisconsin. Known as the Great Fire of 1871, it swept across Door, Kewaunee, and Brown counties — destroying homes, farms, forests, and entire communities. Thousands of people lost everything, and many lives were lost in just hours. BHC's annual remembrance of the Great Fire will be held on Saturday, October 4 starting at 9:30 at the Belgian Heritage Center. Three presentations will tell the story of the early days of the Belgian settlement and how the Great Fire transformed the lives of the settlers.

Presentations will start at 9:30 with Sandy (Lampereur) Orsted presenting "Belgian Life on the Door Peninsula" covering the history, challenges and successes of the Belgian settlements before and after the fire. At 10:00, Captain David Siegel of the Green Bay Metro Fire Department (retired) will explain the nature of the fire, why it was so deadly and dispel common misunderstandings about the Great Fire and recent major fires. A re-enactment of the experiences of Emmerence Gaspart Englebert, a Great Fire survivor,



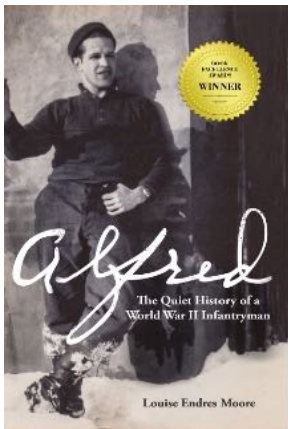
The same series of Great Fire talks will be presented at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion on Tuesday, October 8 as part of the Miracle of the Fire remembrance. The talks will be presented twice, starting at 1:15 and 3:45 at Mother of Mercy Hall. Visit championshrine.org for more information about the day's events.

by her great-granddaughter, Barb Englebert Chisholm will begin at 10:45. Following the presentations, David Siegel will conduct a site visit to Tornado Park so you can see for yourself why the small settlement of Williamsonville was destroyed.

Everyone is welcome and no admission is required. A drawing for door prizes donated by the Brussels-Union-Gardner Fire Department will be held after the presentations. You must be present to win.

We strongly encourage students (pre-teen and up) to take this opportunity to understand the land we live on, the struggles faced by those who came before us and how our ancestors endured this unimaginable tragedy.

Veterans Day Special Event — November 8



Louise Endres Moore author of "Alfred" / Belgians in the War

BHC will open for a special event in honor of Veterans Day on Saturday, November 8 from 10:00 until 3:00. Visitors will see war related artifacts and a special photo collection of the many Belgians who served in the United States Armed Services as far back as the Civil War.

At 1:00, Louise Endres Moore will discuss her award-winning book "Alfred" describing her nearly 20-year journey to discover the full story of her father's World War II experiences.

Initially told he had been a barber, chauffeur and German language translator, Louise's dogged research revealed his role as a reluctant frontline machine gunner in Europe. It is a remarkable story of wartime service and a touching tribute of a father by his daughter. Louise will be available after her talk for a book signing and to display her father's wartime memorabilia.



Oliver and Rose (Delfosse) Parins with sons Edwin, Wilfred, Leonard and Melvin. Oliver is in his World War I uniform with his sons who all served in World War II.

Thank You Kermis Supporters and Volunteers!

The 2025 BHC Kermis was bigger than ever thanks to generous cash and prize sponsors, the MANY people who attended and 85 hardworking volunteers. Major sponsors included:

Kinnard Farms
Jerseyland Dairy
John's Johns

GFL Environmental
Peters Concrete
Tadych's Marketplace Foods

Here are a few photos of our volunteers hard at work.



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
PO Box 173
Brussels, WI 54204

Do You Know What School This Is?

This wonderful school photo was submitted by Barbara Buschman. No details were recorded on the photo but is it thought to be in Gardner. The front is very similar to the Brussels Grade School, but some building details are different.

Do you know what school this is or when it was taken? If so, email contact@belgianheritagecenter.org or call 920-825-7319.

