

# Gazette van Detroit

SINCE 1914



Unmatched: Toots  
SEE PAGE 11



## A Remarkable Find

Bas De Wispelaere made a remarkable find, as he cleaned out the attic in his house in Bassevelde. It was an old, metal box, containing old pictures and old bills. Two special envelopes caught his eye: two letters, written by Canadian soldiers to their families in Ontario, which were never sent. The soldiers were Art Warner and Clarence Weirmer, both members of D-company of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment.

Modest Van Achte, from the Regional Historical Society "Twee Ambachten" from Assenede, contacted Iris De Pover. She is a voluntary guide at the Canada-Poland War Museum in Adegem

and member of the Royal Canadian Legion zone Europe, which is the Canadian Veteran Service. She was able to quickly determine that both soldiers had survived the war, and through a contact at the ICL found that Art Warner was still alive, but that unfortunately Clarence Weirmer and his wife had passed a few years ago.

Coincidentally, she had guided WW2 veteran Ken Rowland and his three daughters through the region in May 2010 as they retraced the route he had battled, from Normandy deep into Germany, with his regiment, the Lincoln and

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### Fundraising Gala

A successful gathering in Grosse Pointe, Michigan

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### Racing Nico

Nico Verdonck, Belgium's young racing talent

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### Rode Duivels

The Belgian national team in great position for the World Cup

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## Bellewaerde Baby Bison birth

A European bison or wisent was born in the Bellewaerde animal park in Ieper (West Flanders). Wisents became extinct in the wild after the Second World War, but due to a reintroduction scheme small herds have been spotted in the wild again.

Bellewaerde introduced a breeding program for European bisons last spring and has four wisents.

The birth went fine. The young bison and its mother Esperanza are both fine. After the birth, the calf almost immediately opened its eyes. Only 20 minutes later, it made a first attempt to stand on its legs. Soon after, it drank milk from its mother.

The birth of a young bison calf is important, because Bellewaerde plays a role in the international breeding program for bisons. (fundersnieux.be)

## Jamie Oliver receives a special honor in Belgium



Jamie Oliver

The famous British chef and media personality Jamie Oliver has become an honorary member of the Belgian Knighthood of the Brewers' Mash Staff. The Belgian Brewers' Organization cites Oliver's "outstanding merit" for its decision.

Jamie Oliver can call himself a Knight of Honor in the Knighthood of the Brewers' Mash Staff now. The news was announced by the Belgian Brewers' Organization which only gives the title to people who have "an outstanding merit for the sector or who have acted as ambassadors."

Oliver was knighted yesterday, when he was in Belgium shooting a new TV program. He was knighted at the head office of the Belgian Brewers' Federation together with his colleague Jimmy Beherly. He joins a number of other names on a list, like the American ambassador Howard Gutman, the Brussels Mayor Freddy Thielemans and Ray Cokes and Jean Blaute of the TV program Tournée Générale about Belgian beers. (fundersnieux.be)

BELGIUM NEWS  
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PAID ROSELLE, MICHIGAN  
PERIODICAL POST MAIL

## Paula's Place

## There Is No Business Like Race Business

Francorchamps, Le Mans, Nürburgring, Mugello, Monza, Indianapolis. Magic names that sound familiar to almost everyone. Spectacular race cars come to our mind with equally spectacular drivers. Few of us have been there. Closest that we came to it is on the TV news on the occasion of a Grand Prix, highlighting the crashes, followed by other cars racing by and champagne and bottle gifts for the winner. The spectacle takes a couple of minutes, and is usually followed by a quarter of an hour news about football games and its stars.

"Why the difference of public interest," I asked Nico Verdonck. "It is very simple," he replied. "Car racing is an elite/exclusive sport just like horse-riding. Very few people have the means to buy that kind of sport car or thoroughbred horse. A football or a tennis racket are articles that are financially available for every average sport fanatic. These are generally understood, anyone can practice it.

This calls for some information, and to get some, I don't have to run to the other side of the world, as Nico is sitting right next to me. Born in 1985, he rose to prominence when he competed in the 2004 International Formula 3000 season with the Belgian Astronova team, where Fernando Alonso raced for. After his home race at the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps in 2004, he won a competition for the best driving style. This sounds simple but I feel sure it wasn't.

"Where you always attracted by speed?" I asked Nico. "Indeed, I was," he replied. "When I received my first toy car as a toddler, I went on top of a hill and could not wait until I was down with my bike." "You must have grown up between engines," I ventured. "On the contrary," he said, "I grew up between chicken." I tried to figure out the connection. Fact is that our Nico received his first motorized wheels when he was four and a half years old. When he was eight, Jean-Marie Pfaff ran a youth camp organization, and Nico's father thought it a good idea to enter his son and make him familiar with the different sports activities that were involved. What he didn't realize was that go-karting was the main activity of the group. And before he knew it, Nico was hooked. Every spare moment he was to be found at the circuits of a factory premise just outside of Antwerp. It seems to me that it was a dangerous pastime for an eight-year-old, I suggested. Those go-karts reach serious speeds, and don't even have a roof. All that could happen if they would flip over. My young pilot gave me the impression that I was overreacting by mentioning that I would be over-



Paula Marckx  
European  
Correspondent

whelmed with fear watching those youngsters racing by. "Didn't you need a driver's license," I inquired, "at that age." "Not when you were on private property," Nico replied. And that was that. Anyway, I had to admit that it made him the fearless, professional driver he is now.

In 2003 Nico made his first year in single seaters in the Formula Renault. He made his entry in the professional world thanks to the support of the R.A.C.B. (Royal Automobile Club of Belgium) and his former President John Gossens. In 2009 Verdonck started sport car racing by competing in the inaugural season of the Formula Le Mans Cup. He shared a DAMS-run car with

disappears. "Are you never scared," I wondered? "Never," he said, "the moment I would feel scared will be the time to stop racing." Another question came to my mind. However, first I had to know what kind of car he had for personal use. "A Mercedes," he said. "When you leave the circuit and your race car how does it feel to drive away in a normal car with speed limits?" "I don't mind," he replied, "I don't feel the need to speed on the highway or in places where they have very low limits." "Do you mean that you never had tickets for speeding," I insisted. Could it be that he looked a little embarrassed? He is fair play, so he admitted it had happened, but only for a minor violation. Thank heaven, I am not the only one.

A last question: what is the most frustrating when he drives on our roads? Without hesita-



Nico Verdonck answering questions after his race.

Gavin Croje and won the drivers championship. His ultimate dream is to become a works-driver. At this very moment, he can only enter into competitions thanks to his knowledge, experience and more decisive sponsorship. Which is not always that easy to find. Especially in a country with no car manufacturers and brands of their own.

Coming back to reality. At least to my conception of this elite sport. First of all, I wanted to know what kind of feeling Nico has when he can race at hundreds of miles an hour without having a police car chasing him. "It is heaven," he replied, and looking at the expression on his face. I am ready to believe him, that being totally in control, the rest of the world totally

tion: "cars and trucks that drive in the left lane when they should be in the right lane."

With this he hints that drivers, whether professional or private, should get some training to mentally and physically prepare them for what they are up to.

Smart advice! Thank you, Nico. See you at the races!

More info:  
[www.nicoverdonck.be](http://www.nicoverdonck.be)  
[twitter.com/nicoverdonck](https://twitter.com/nicoverdonck)  
[www.facebook.com/pages/Nico-Verdonck/432982125157?ref=hl](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nico-Verdonck/432982125157?ref=hl)

Nico received his first motorized wheels when he was four and a half years old.

## Once again, Nico is the strongest representative for McLaren

Once again, Nico Verdonck made his mark in the all but last race of the Blancpain Endurance championship. The resident from Brussels finished in tenth place during the championship on the Nürburgring in Germany. Not a bad achievement considering the fact that the car had to start in 38th position after a tire exploded during the qualifications.

"It certainly was unfortunate that a tire had to explode exactly during that crucial phase in the qualifications. This doesn't happen very often, but when it does you just have to accept it. I brought the car back to the box, but the damage was too extensive to complete another fast round. We concentrated on getting the car ready for the race. As a result, we had to start in 38th position", Nico commented after the qualifications.

The race started with Seija Ara



behind the wheel of the #5 Boutsen Ginion Racing Team, in the colours of ALD-Automotive. The Japanese who excelled in 2005 by winning the 24H of Le Mans, was impressed by the magnitude of the starting field (50 cars). After a good strategy with a first safety-car situation, the Scot Franchetti left in 19th position. Despite all of his experience he was only able to move up 1 place and Nico left in 18th position.

"I had expected to be allowed to start closer to the top 10!", Nico laughed. "P18 was a decent starting position but the gap was just too big. Luckily the car was tuned properly and I was still able to end in 10th place and secure points for the third time. The only thing that bothered me was the lack of speed on board of the McLaren MP4-12c. This is a problem that we would like to have solved before Navarra."

With just one more race to go, which will be held in Navarra in Spain in 2 weeks, the chances for a first win are finally in sight. You can actually feel the progression and everything is finally falling into place.