



# Switzerland



NEWSLETTER OF THE SWISS-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Volume 18, No. 1

Spring 2009

## President's Message

Gruezi, bonjour, buongiorno  
It was great to see so many of you  
and some new faces at the  
Christmas luncheon. I am looking  
forward to see all of you at our spring  
event.

First of all: Congratulations to the  
Steelers, especially Ben, whom we  
claim as one of ours as he is of  
Swiss decent!

I would like to give you some  
information about Switzerland and  
the European Union (EU).  
Even though Switzerland is not a  
member, it has a special relationship  
with the EU. So far the Swiss people  
have rejected full membership. Many  
Swiss believe full membership would  
compromise the country's strict  
neutrality and fear it would  
undermine Switzerland's system of  
direct democracy in which voters  
have the final say on all major  
policies.

Swiss politicians conducted  
negotiations which resulted in ten  
treaties with the EU. A large share of  
EU law is applicable to Switzerland.  
This bilateral approach is  
consistently supported by the  
people. It allows the Swiss to keep a  
sense of sovereignty. Treaties  
include Free Movement of People,  
Air and Road Traffic, Technical  
Trade Barriers, Agriculture, etc..  
The currency in Switzerland is still  
the Swiss Franc. Those of you who

have traveled to Europe realized that  
Switzerland is surrounded by  
countries that use the Euro. Today  
the Euro is accepted in many places,  
especially in border towns and tourist  
places. Swiss Railways accept  
Euros. Some bank cash machines  
issue Euros as well as Swiss Francs.  
At this point I would like to remind all  
of you who are Swiss citizens to take  
advantage of the voting process on  
federal matters by mail. Feel free to  
ask for information.

See you soon, -Annemarie Frick

## Have you paid your dues?

If you have not yet paid your  
dues for this year, you should  
receive an insert with this  
newsletter. Please take the time to  
return your dues. Feel free to send it  
with your Swiss Night registration!

## Folk Festival

by Jhon Smith

At its Feb. 3 general meeting, the  
Pittsburgh Folk Festival voted to  
postpone its 2009 festival from its  
scheduled May dates to an  
unspecified date later in the year,  
probably in the fall. We will be  
participating and will let everyone  
know as soon as more info is  
available.

## **Treasurer's Report**

*by Walter Schaller*

We had a beginning balance of \$6,684.63 on September 27, 2008. Since then we had an income of \$2,040.53 and expenses of \$1,547.86. Our balance as of December 31, 2008 is \$7377.30. The Citizens Nationality Room Account balance as of 1/12/09 is \$8,411.69 and the estimated current balance in the University of Pittsburgh Swiss Room Account is \$130,000.00 for a combined total of \$138,411.69.

## **Nationality Room Update**

*by Fred Carlson, SNRC Chairman  
Fundraising*

The Swiss Nationality Room Committee (SNRC) wishes to thank all donors who responded to the Fall Appeal mailing that went out the second week of November, and to those who have continued to participate in the table auction and those who bought tickets to the Ben Roethlisberger t-shirt auction. Despite the recessionary business climate, our committee is enthusiastic at the loyalty of our donor base and we are pressing on with all planning regarding our appeals and auctions this year. We especially appreciate those on the mailing list who have 'spread the news' about the room project to other Swiss and 'friends of Switzerland', especially by giving out extra copies of our trifold brochure. I count 10 new donors in the past 8 weeks just from these creative handoffs of our materials to NEW DONORS!

As reported earlier, all 26 cantonal chairs have been auctioned off and all the pledges have been

paid on 23 of them. 94% of the monies pledged have come in and it took only 18 months for this schedule we initially planned a three-year timetable to complete. The table auction unveiled at the last August 1 picnic has had 13 \$500 table blocks purchased out of a goal of 40 \$500 contributions meant to underwrite the building of the tables representing the German, French, Romansch, Italian, and Swiss Abroad cultural groups. This is a third of the table blocks successfully pledged (and most paid in full already) after only 5 months.

We recently crossed the \$150,000 threshold in our total fundraising.

## In memoriam

The SNRC sadly received the news of 4 major supporters of our project in the past year passing away. We mourn the loss of Dr. Joseph Novak (longtime chair of the Austrian room committee and major advisor to our committee in its early days), Florence Jacob, Ruth Krebs, and Hazel von Arx. RIP.

## Large Donor Recruitment

We have requested specific funding help from the Ben Roethlisberger Giving Back Foundation and expect to hear back at the conclusion of the football season. Ben, an honorary member of our committee since 2007, has generously given our committee a number of signed items for auction. Our committee plans during 2009 to release a number of these items for auction on E-Bay's national non-profit auction site. This raises the possibility of large donor giving for

such major purchases as architect fees, display cases, kachelofen, ceiling work, leaded windows, or wall friezes. If anyone wishes to fund one of these major expenses, you are invited to contact our committee in complete privacy.

#### Swiss Review & Gateway Press

The February 1 issue of Swiss Review arriving in the US around the beginning of March has another feature on our project with a handsome graphic of the floor plan. Thanks to Wal Baur, Regional News editor, for her continued willingness to help promote this room effort internationally.

Zandy Dudiak of the Gateway Press chain wrote a very detailed article about our room and its historic progress that appeared in the January 15 editions of papers in the east suburbs (Monroeville, Plum, Penn Hills, Irwin, Murrysville, etc). We have received donations from people we have never heard from before who saw this feature! Zandy interviewed Dr. Kunz, Maxine Bruhns, Evelyn Ruffing, and the Carlsons about this project. We understand copies have even been sent to Switzerland friends and relatives to inform them. Rene Nigg, former Swiss consul for Pittsburgh 1957-1971, recently called me and was excited to see this progress that had occurred without him even knowing it! He is visiting Pittsburgh March 25-30 so we hope he can attend Swiss Night March 29 to see old friends and can catch up on the room project.

#### Vendors Progress

Our committee understands that no bids and work can be let until 100% of our funding is in place. We are attempting to secure cost ranges from both CH and US sources in finding the best possible cost estimates. Evelyn Ruffing will be talking to design architect Justin Ruessli this summer in Lucerne about some of these decisions. We are also in contact with woodcrafters in PA and WV about their prospective services, commodity costs, and pricing guidelines, and have recently received a detailed informal bid from a woodcarving professional from Helvetia WV that has our hopes very high about finalizing our stretch drive of fudnraising in the nearer rather than farther term. His bid includes highly reasonable costs for the ceiling, walls, floor, doorway, display cases, tables, chairs, friezework, benchwork, window and blackboard framings, and even a vendor source for the leaded windows. We look forward to pursuing this possible vendor on site this spring and making his information available to design architect Justin Ruessli as he discusses production options and costs with Evelyn this summer in Lucerne.

Thank you one and all. Our committee stands rested and willing to conclude our room fundraising efforts and invite all of you to help us achieve our goal!

-Fred Carlson for the SNRC

## New SAS Exec Board

The new exec. board members are:

President: Annemarie Frick  
africkpit@aol.com  
412.443.7388

Vice-President: Paul Lienhardt  
pjtl@verizon.net  
412.835.9345

Secretary: Jhon Smith  
jhsst7@gmail.com  
412.521.2584

Treasurer: Walter Schaller  
walter.schaller@zoominternet.net  
412.980.4421

Membership Secretary: Edith  
Sutterlin  
momsutterlin@zoominternet.net  
724.934.9191

Board Member – Conrad Ostertag  
724.898.3029

Board Member – Lyndall Huggler  
lynbeth@msn.com

Board Member – Bruce Kuenzi  
412.271.5003

Board Member – Andy Schwarz  
a.schwarz918@comcast.net  
412.322.3323

## Swiss Fasnacht

by *Emilie Muelly*

Fasnacht is a carnival-style celebration held in many villages in Switzerland as well as southern Germany, Alsace, and western Austria. It takes place between Epiphany (January 6<sup>th</sup>) and the beginning of Lent (February 25<sup>th</sup> in 2009).

The festival occurs at different dates in different villages and usually lasts a couple days to a week in a given village. The Catholic cantons tend to celebrate Fasnacht earlier, just before Lent, whereas villages in the Protestant cantons usually hold their festivals during the first week of Lent, with the one in the city of Basel being the last and most famous. This year the Basler Fasnacht will take place March 2 – 4, 2009.

One of the first Fasnacht celebrations takes place in Lachen, Schwyz, a town of 7,601 inhabitants, including my in-laws! Michael and I went to the first event of their festival – a parade where all the local groups dressed up in their unique costume and paraded around the town, scaring off the “demons of winter”. Actual participation in the event is fairly exclusive to those who originate from the area, but observing and enjoying is encouraged of everyone. This was a wonderful experience full of bright colorful costumes, joyous music, laughter and dancing. View photos of the event in Lachen at: <http://tinyurl.com/fasnacht> or even a video we made at: <http://tinyurl.com/fasnacht-video>.

## SWISS NIGHT

When: Sunday, March 29, 2009

Where: The Ratskeller, Teutonia Männerchor (downstairs)  
857 Phineas Street; Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Schedule:

1:00 pm	Jass & Puzzles
3:00 pm	Social Hour, Swiss Style Meats & Cheeses, Vegetables & Fruit appetizers
4:00 pm	Cheese Fondue Dinner with 1 glass of wine Dessert – Coffee – Tea

Also featuring performances by Kinderchor & Schweizer Männerchor  
and a Tombola raffle.

Cost: \$20 per adult/teen, 13 years and older  
\$10 per child 6-12 years  
Children under 6 are free. (Please register attendance!)

To bring: Extra Jass decks, Fondue pots/burners and Tombola gifts

Registration: Send enclosed registration form & check payable to Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh by Friday, March 20, 2009 to:

Paul Llenhardt  
1527 High Knoll Dr.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15241-3311

## SAS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<b>Sunday, March 29, 2009</b> Starting at 1pm	<b>Swiss Night</b> Teutonia
<b>May 16, 2009</b> 3:00 pm	<b>SAS Board Meeting &amp; Dinner</b> 124 Drake Dr. Wexford, PA 15090 <i>Reminder: All SAS members welcome.</i>
<b>Saturday, August 1, 2009</b>	<b>Annual Swiss Independence Picnic</b> Richland Barn, Bakerstown, PA



## 2009 Swiss Night Registration Form

**Number of adults** at \$20 each: \_\_\_\_\_

**Names of adults:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Number of children** at \$10 each (age 6 – 12 years): \_\_\_\_\_

**Names of children:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Number of children attending free under the age of 6 years:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: Swiss American Society of Pittsburgh.

Please mail by Friday, March 20, 2009 to: Paul Lienhardt  
1527 High Knoll Dr.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15241-3311