



Switzerland



NEWSLETTER OF THE SWISS-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
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Summer 2009

President's Message

Grüezi, bonjour, buongiorno, June 2009

I broke my hip in April and was immobile for two months. I started listening to operas, among others, William Tell by Rossini. Rossini composed the opera based on a play by Friedrich Schiller. Through the play, Tell, the Swiss legend, attracted worldwide renown. As our National holiday approaches, I thought it would be fun to talk to you a little bit about this legendary folk's hero who symbolizes struggle for political and individual freedom.

William (Wilhelm) Tell was said to have lived late 13th, early 14th century, in Bürglen, canton of Uri. Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden were the original cantons of the confederation, founded by the Rütli oath in 1291. William Tell's name is associated with the events of Rütli.

The famous story goes as follows: Hermann Gessler, the Austrian Vogt of Altdorf, demanded that the local folk bow before his hat on top of a pole. Tell passed without bowing and was arrested. As punishment he was forced to shoot an apple off the head of his son Walter, or both would be killed. Tell split the fruit with a single bolt. Gessler became enraged when Tell told him the second bolt was for him, if his son would have been killed. The Vogt had Tell bound and brought to his ship. Crossing Lake Lucerne (Vierwaldstättersee) in a storm, Tell managed to escape. When Gessler arrived later in Küssnacht, Tell shot him. His defiance of Gessler led to the formation of the Swiss confederation.

Growing up in Switzerland, we read about Wilhelm Tell in schoolbooks and believed the story was as true as any other story in history. Historians generally consider the saga to be fiction as neither Tell's nor Gessler's existence can be proven. In 1891, a scientific account of the founding of the confederacy was published, commissioned by the government, for the celebration of the first National holiday of Switzerland on August 1, 1891.

Whatever the story may be, Tell lives on as a hero in popular culture, as a fighter for freedom. It is said that 60% of the Swiss believe in Tell as a historical figure.

- Annemarie Frick

Treasurer's Report

by Walter Schaller

Our beginning balance in January was \$7,377.30 in our money market account at Dollar Bank. The ending balance in April was \$6,946.02. The Citizens Bank Nationality Room Account had a balance in April of \$11,915.31. The current estimated balance in the University of Pittsburgh's Swiss Room Account is \$130,595.49, for a total of \$142,510.80.

The proceeds from our Tombolas, and sales of Swiss items continue to go to the Swiss Room Fund. Many thanks to our members who continue to support this important fundraising effort.

We have many Swiss Roots T-Shirts (new style!) and Swiss Coffee Mugs. Feel free to contact me if you would like to order any, I

can ship them anywhere. I will also have a sale table at the picnic. Email walter.schaller@zoominternet.net or at 412-980-4421

Nominating Committee

Election of Officers and Board of Directors for The Swiss American Society is held in late Fall. Prior to the elections, a Nominating Committee is needed to "scout the troops" for candidates and to elicit acceptance of the nominations. Three individuals are needed for this task. A membership list and assistance from previous committee members will be available. An early search is best to avoid a harried rush when the slate is needed to be finalized. If you would be willing to be on this committee, please call Conrad Ostertag at (724) 898-3092 or (724)822-0504.

Nationality Room Update

by Frederick H. Carlson, Swiss Nationality Room Committee (SNRC) Vice-Chairman

Clock Speeding Up for Swiss Nationality Room Progress!

The last 3 months of our room progress requires full, enthusiastic spreading of much positive news to all the members of the Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh! Our new theme is *Swiss Room by 2011!* Let me note in chronological order the recent important decisions and progress...

March 24 Meeting at Pitt

Steven Altherr Named as Architect-of-Record

At this meeting in the Braun Room at the Cathedral of Learning, we learned from University Architect Park Rankin and NRIEP Director Dr. E. Maxine Bruhns that informal estimates received by our committee from US-based craftspeople could enable us to have the prime woodworking contractor serve as the general contractor for the project. This judgement was based on the wide expertise provided by domestic vendor groups, and the relatively non-invasive construction design of

our room plan.

The cost savings of having the woodworking provider be the general contractor as well are very substantial. A rough estimate on union and construction/demolition/electrical prep work was prepared by Park Rankin and this contributes to an encouraging new estimate of our construction costs that have prompted our theme of 'Swiss Room by 2011.' A world-wide flattening in woods commodities' costs due to the construction recession also has us honestly optimistic in doing the project sooner rather than later. We also heard positively from Pitt that domestic vendors can undoubtedly be considered for all or most of the work in the room if 'they satisfy the aesthetic vision of the native country's design architect (Justin Ruessli).' There are NO percentage formulae for where the actual elements of the room project are made.

At this meeting it was also announced that we could formally name Steven Altherr, a member of the SASP, as Architect-of-Record for the Swiss Room project. The Architect-of-Record is responsible for completing the final design drawings that construction can work from, as well as being available to consult and answer regarding on-site issues during the construction phase. Steven has met with our SNRC in 2005 for an interview, and met with Justin Ruessli in May 2007 at Steve's former offices at Burt Hill. Steve now is working for EDGE Studio, and is in the midst of many projects for Pitt at the same time. His working relationship with Park Rankin will help make our construction phase smooth when we get to that point.

March 29 Rene Nigg Visits Swiss Night at Teutonia

Rene Nigg, former Swiss consul for Pittsburgh 1957-1971, attended our Swiss Night March 29 at the Teutonia. He recently emailed me and offers this greeting to all his friends:

I was very impressed by the professionalism shown in the Swiss Nationality Room project and

the enthusiasm shown by the parties involved. The participation at the gathering in the Teutonia awakened a multitude of memories and I was deeply moved by the attendance of so many who remembered Diane and me and their show of amity after so many years. Trudy Kuenzi sent me since a very nice note and enclosed some photos taken on this occasion. Please extend to all involved my most sincere expression of gratitude, combined with my very best wishes to you and your committee for a successful completion of your very worthy project.

Cordial greetings, René

We also thank Rene for his generous donation he made to us right at the event!

April 13 Meeting with Grant Writer Tom Prendergast

Room Benefactor Ed Graf recently steered our attention toward grant writer Tom Prendergast, who has demonstrated a love of Switzerland and the desire to see our room project be completed soon. Tom met with SNRC members Fred Carlson and Philip Bottonari on April 13 concerning Tom's interest. Tom is now approaching two Swiss-American Foundations who support cultural projects like ours for major gifts. He will be reporting more when he returns from a current European trip. He also is involved with grant writing for the Teutonia.

April 25 Journey to West Virginia

A group of domestic vendors specializing in woodworking and leaded glass supplied samples and portfolios at this meeting. Samples from this group were taken to Switzerland by Evelyn Ruffing so Justin could see US-based quality, and this enthused Justin to complete a faster fundraising process for the project with no drop in quality. The woodcrafter has demonstrated capabilities to construct entire wood rooms and has furnished *informal* estimates on completing the tables, chairs, lectern, benchwork, display cases, ceiling, walls and paneling, floors, door and doorway, and framing. The glass craftsman showed his

leaded glass knowledge and processes he would use if he were given the windows assignment including some small stained glass inserts of the first three cantons. We toured the woodworker studio, an impressively massive facility, which is truly capable of completing our needs. When bids are let out, we will be considering multiple vendors for bidding, but with Pitt's system low bid wins. SNRC members who made the trip included Fred & Nancy Flury Carlson, Edith and Philip Bottonari, Walt Schaller, Evelyn Ruffing, and NRIEP Director Maxine Bruhns.

May 16 Meeting at 321

Our possible woodworking craftsman followed up on our meeting April 25 to come and investigate in detail our future Swiss Room, room 321, and other existing rooms at the NRIEP. On short notice, we were able to gather Dr. E. Maxine Bruhns, Steven Altherr, and Fred Carlson to discuss how certain issues in the room remodeling would be handled. Maxine gave the group a lengthy descriptive tour of the most pertinent rooms, including the German, Austrian, and Early American rooms.

May 29 Evelyn Ruffing Meets with Design Architect Justin Ruessli in Lucerne

Our committee thanks Evelyn Ruffing for her self-sponsored trip to Switzerland this past month. Evelyn brought our entire package of new domestic samples and Room estimate reporting to meet with design architect Justin Ruessli and make some decisions on where the rooms' crafts could be made based. Evelyn reports that Justin was extremely pleased with the quality of this work, and he is certainly behind the idea of the majority of the crafts being made in the US for cost reasons and logistical efficiency. Evelyn and Justin made many decisions regarding nuances of styling of the furniture and trim work, and Justin may be visiting later this summer to make decisions regarding the final construction drawings. Justin and Ed Graf have informed us separately that they may be

able to find a donated kachelofen to be given to our museum-style Swiss Room! That would be a true 15% reduction in the room cost if either one of them are successful!

Fundraising Successes Continue

The Swiss Nationality Room Committee (SNRC) wishes to thank all donors who responded to the SPRING Appeal mailing that went out March 31. 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 continue to count many new donors in the past drive just from creative handoffs of our materials to NEW DONORS and other family members! The table auction unveiled at the last August 1 picnic has had 19 \$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/Fifth Switzerland cultural groups. This is almost a half of the table blocks successfully pledged (and most paid in full already) after only 10 months. Please be generous as we auction more table blocks at the Picnic August 1.

We recently crossed the \$155,000 threshold in our total fundraising. With our recent optimistic news about construction estimates, and large donor gifts on the horizon, our fundraising outreach will be emphasizing a 'stretch drive' finishing theme. We would like to conclude fundraising by spring 2010, begin authorizing materials purchasing then, and have all the constructed elements ready to be installed into the prepped room over the May-September 2011 summer construction season. Please be generous with the project over the next year because as our estimate gets closer to being attained the sooner we can let bids and begin purchases of the woods we need.

Large Donor Recruitment

We have requested specific funding help

from Ben Roethlisberger personally and expect to hear back before the beginning 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 very soon during 2009 to release a number of these items for auction on E-Bay. A local Swiss company is currently considering a major gift. We are pushing ahead with our special promotional sheets to prompt large donor giving for such major purchases as, for example, architect fees, display cases, kachelofen, ceiling work, leaded windows, or wall trim friezes. If anyone wishes to fund one of these major expenses, you are invited to contact our committee in complete privacy (Heinz Kunz 412.967.9123). The teacher's lectern is privately taken at this time.

Bruderhof Chair Silent Auction

This beautiful Swiss-style Stabelle chair was crafted by the woodworking students of the Bruderhof Community.

Support the Swiss Nationality Room Fund at this year's picnic by competing in the Silent Auction to win the chair. The chair and bid sheets will be available from the start of the picnic. The bidding will end and the winner will be announced just prior to the Picnic Dinner on August 1.

The winning bidder is not required to pay the full amount pledged on the day of the picnic, and has until December 1, 2009 to complete the payment.

*If you will not be at the picnic and would like to submit a bid, please send your name, phone #, and bid to Nancy Flury Carlson, 118 Monticello Dr., Monroeville, PA, 15146 or e-mail with subject line: SWISS CHAIR to nancy@carlsonstudio.com. Mailed/e-mailed bids received no later than July 31 will be entered into the silent auction at the picnic. If e-mailing, remember to use the subject line above or it will probably get deleted as SPAM.

Swiss Radio Program Day AUG 2.

The German Hour 730AM 4:00 to 5:00PM or on the internet www.wpitam.com will focus on Swiss Independence. The Swiss American Society of Pittsburgh is a program sponsor. Be sure to tune in to "Die deutsche Heimatstunde" with Heino Coelle, broadcast on 730 AM on your radio to listen to this program of such special interest to our Swiss heritage.

Welcome New Members

Jeffrey Kuenzi is no stranger amongst the Pittsburgh Swiss Americans. Son of Bruce Kuenzi, he and his newlywed wife, Gabe, live in Lock Haven. Jeffrey is a library products manager; Gabe works for local government.

Damon Wehrli and his wife, Lynn, live in North Huntingdon. They work in college admissions and healthcare mgmt. They are interested in meeting others to learn more about Damon's Swiss heritage.

Two families who attended last summer's picnic for their first SAS event are becoming our newest members. Johann & Vicki Spamm first joined with us at last summer's picnic, so some of you had a chance to meet them. Let us also greet warmly a young couple, Alec Vaezi and Laura Alonso, who arrived towards the end of last year's picnic due to their young son, Tilden's, late awakening from his naptime ; this year they will also bring along their infant son, Austin, born Sept. 2008, to join us for his first Swiss Confederation day celebration!

Calendar of Coming Events

Swiss Luncheon 5 Dec, 2009; Atria's 11:30-3:30. Rte 8 Richland 5517 Wm Flynn Hwy-menu/program \$20.

Sami-Klauss Sunday 6 Dec, 2009; at Teutonia. \$5 / family for kids

Famous Swiss-Americans

Albert Gallatin is best remembered for his 13

year tenure as Secretary of the Treasury during the Jefferson and Madison administrations. In that time he reduced the national debt, purchased the Louisiana Territory and funded the Lewis and Clark expedition. Gallatin's accomplishments and contributions are highlighted in his restored country estate, Friendship Hill, which can be visited at 1 Washington Parkway, Farmington PA. 15437. For more info call 724-329-5512.

SAS Exec Board

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ANNUAL SWISS NATIONAL DAY PICNIC

When: Saturday, August 1, 2009

Where: Richland Barn, Bakerstown, PA (white barn/green roof; above the ballfields)

:

Directions: **Heading North on Route 8 from Pittsburgh**

From the PA Turnpike interchange on Route 8 go north 2.8 miles and turn right onto Heckert Road (Just past the Bakerstown Feed and Garden Center. At the 4 way stop (intersection of Heckert and the Red Belt) continue straight. At the next stop sign turn right onto Van Velsor Drive.

Heading South on Route 8 from Butler

Pass the 228 intersection and Sandy Hill/Cunningham Road. When you pass Zottolas Garden Center, turn left onto Heckert and the park entrance will be on the left.

From the Red Belt Warrendale Area and I 79

Follow the red belt east until it passes under Route 8 in Bakerstown. At the 4 way stop, turn left onto Heckert Road. At the next stop, turn right onto Van Velsor Drive.

From the Red Belt Tarentum Area

Follow the Red Belt west to Bakertown. At the 4 way stop turn right onto Heckert Road. At the next stop, turn right onto Van Velsor Drive.

Schedule: 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM Registration and Jass

2:00 PM to 4:30 PM Children's and Adults' Games

4:30 PM Singing and updates

5:00 PM Dinner

6:30 PM Tombola

7:00 PM Bonfire

Cost: Catered meal: \$16 each for adults, \$8 each for children.

Bring your own picnic basket: \$6.00 each for adults, \$3.00 each for children

Menu:

* Grilled Swiss-style Bratwurst, served with a "Zwiebelsauce" (onion sauce) or plain, sliced sausage rolls with assorted mustards.

* A variety of salads, including Swiss style potato and carrot salads.

* Apple and apricot "Wähe" (Swiss fruit tart)

All cooked by Michael and Emilie Muelly, and Walter Schaller

* Drinks (soda and beer) provided for all.

To bring: Directions, extra Jass decks, your own pitcher, glasses, lawn chairs, Tombola donations, cameras, Swiss lampignons, Swiss CDs and cassette tapes.

Registration: Send enclosed registration form & check payable to Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh by Tuesday July 14, 2008 to: Paul Lienhardt:

1527 High Knoll Dr.
Pittsburgh, PA 15241-3311

2009 Swiss Nationality Day Picnic Registration Form

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Please list the names of those attending

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Number of Adult Dinners _____ X \$16.00 each = \$ _____

Number of Child (6-12) Dinners _____ X \$8.00 each = \$ _____

Number of Adult Picnic Baskets _____ X \$6.00 each = \$ _____

Number of Child Picnic Baskets _____ X \$3.00 each = \$ _____

Number of Pro Patria pins _____ X \$5.00 each = \$ _____

Number of Children attending free under age of six years. _____

TOTAL PICNIC PAYMENT AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

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

Please mail by Tuesday, July 14, 2009 to: Paul Lienhardt
1527 High Knoll Dr.
Pittsburgh, PA 15241-3311

Family Membership Dues Form

Family Name(s): _____

\$10 / family x _____ Families = \$ _____ enclosed for membership dues

TOTAL (Picnic + Dues) Enclosed: _____

Please mail your dues to Paul Lienhardt (Address above); feel free to send together with picnic registration.

