



Switzerland



NEWSLETTER OF THE SWISS-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Volume 25, No. 1

Spring 2016

Greetings everyone! Hope you are all doing well. We look forward to seeing many of you at the **Swiss Fondue Party on Sunday, April 10**, at the Teutonia Männerchor in Pittsburgh. Please make plans to attend, and respond by sending in your registration form, which is included at the end of this newsletter.

Also, please be sure to "Save the Date" for the **Swiss Nationality Day Picnic, Saturday, August 6**, at the Richland Township Community Barn!

The 2015 annual meeting of the General Assembly of the Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh was held in conjunction with the Christmas Luncheon at Teutonia on December 5, 2015. The 44 guests enjoyed a meal of Zürcher Geschetzelttes and Swiss Rippli, as well as a musical performance by the Kinderchor and Jugendchor. The Tombola raised \$232 for the Swiss Nationality Room Scholarship Fund. In addition, a silent auction of two bread boards, custom crafted by Richard Sink, raised an additional \$101 for the scholarship fund.

The following directors and officers were elected to serve in 2016:

President	Lyndall Huggler	(412) 480-1660	lynbeth@msn.com
Vice President	Annemarie Frick	(412) 761-1388	africkpit@aol.com
Treasurer	Beatrice Hook	(724) 627-3049	beahook@gmail.com
Recording Secy.	Jhon Smith	(412) 521-2584	jhsst7@gmail.com
Membership Secy.	Rick Engel	(724) 449-3281	engel.richard@gmail.com
Corresponding Secy.	(vacant)		
Director (2016)	Robert Domenick	(412) 554-8175	rpdomenick5@cs.com
Director (2016)	Koni Ostertag	(724) 898-3029	caeasterday@consolidated.net
Director (2017)	Sylvia Emmenegger-McCoy	(412) 901-7150	sylviaem@hotmail.com
Director (2017)	Jim Shock	(724) 941-6316	jrshock@icloud.com

IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we report on the passing of Cathy Smith, the sister of Jhon Smith. Many of you will remember Cathy as she assisted Jhon at the Swiss table at several events (Folk Festival, Nationalities Room Open House, etc.). The S-ASP Board has authorized a contributions of \$50 toward the Swiss Nationality Room Scholarship Fund in Cathy's memory.

Gotthard Base Tunnel – The Construction Project of the Century



Switzerland has issued a silver 20-franc coin to celebrate the opening of an Alpine mountain tunnel later in 2016. The Gotthard Base Tunnel will be the world's longest and deepest traffic tunnel when it opens. Coin images courtesy of Swissmint.

When the Gotthard Base Tunnel opens in 2016 after 17 years of construction, it will be the world's longest and deepest railway tunnel and the first flat low-level route through the Alps.

The 35.4-mile route is scheduled to open June 1. Switzerland's Federal Council will officially open the "construction project of the century" in the presence of state guests from all over Europe. The festivities for the public are scheduled for June 4 and 5.

Once the new base tunnel is put into operation on December 11, 2016, rail passengers will benefit from a faster connection on the north-south axis. Passenger trains will run on this line every half hour. A total of 260 freight trains will be able to pass through the tunnel every day instead of 180 before the expansion. Passenger trains will reach speeds of up to 200 kilometers an hour (124 miles per hour) and freight trains will operate at 100 kilometers per hour (about 62 miles per hour).

More information can be obtained at www.gottardo2016.ch

Swiss Nationality Room Committee (SNRC) Report

-reported by Frederick H. Carlson, Vice-Chairman SNRC. Contributions from Heinz W. Kunz (chairman SNRC) and Lyndall Huggler (SNRC secretary and current President of the Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh).

Some definitions to bring everyone up-to-speed!

The **SNRC** is the **Swiss Nationality Room Committee**. We represent the interests and programs concerning the Swiss Room 321 situated on the third floor of the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning. The Swiss Room became the 29th Nationality Room dedicated April 22, 2012. Our officers are: Dr. Heinz W. Kunz (Chairman), Fred Carlson (Vice-Chairman), Walter Schaller (Treasurer), and Lyndall Huggler (Secretary). The next nominating and election of officers for the SNRC is at the end of 2016, effective March 1, 2017. We draw our members from interested parties of the greater Pittsburgh Swiss community, primarily Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh members.

We (the SNRC) work hand-in-hand with the **NRIEP (Nationality Rooms and Intercultural Exchange Program)**, whose offices are on the 12th floor of the Cathedral. This is the department within Pitt that runs the Nationality Rooms programs, shepherds new room planning and construction, publicizes and awards the scholarships that come from the various ethnic communities represented in the Nationality Rooms circle, and hosts the **Nationality Council** meetings three times a year where all the room committees share their latest news and events. **Dr. E. Maxine Bruhns is the intrepid Director of this office**, which is overseen by the University of Pittsburgh's **UCIS (University College of International Studies)**.

The Swiss Room's treasury, where our scholarship funds will be drawn from, is accounted for within the NRIEP books overseen by UCIS. We have an **Endowment Fund** that rolls over a decent interest rate monthly, building up enough funding that eventually will support an annual award of \$4,000 for underwriting study abroad activity of Pitt students in Switzerland. This money will stay with Pitt in perpetuity. We also have an **Agency Account** that we can use to pay charges associated with the routine activity of the committee, or can be drawn from to supplement our Endowment draw to make sure our award is \$4,000. This is termed Current Use funding.

The latest Nationality Council meeting of all the room committees was Thursday evening, March 10, 2016 at 6pm in the Braun Room at the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning. Chairman Heinz Kunz gave this report on our news.

The SNRC is exhibiting new Display Case contributions from the collection of Evelyn Ruffing with labels created by Fred Carlson. An antique salt cellar (Salz Schale), cowbell (Kuhklokke), and ceramic flask from Canton Zug (Alte Zuger Kirschflasche), all from the 1800s, are now displayed in the Swiss Room display cases with appropriate labels. Other display case contributions have come from the collections of SNRC members Dr. Heinz Kunz, Rudolf Keller, Edith and Philip Bottonari, Jhon Smith,

and Nancy Flury Carlson, and other donors not on the SNRC (e.g. Rosemund Family ceramics donations, Paul Lienhardt stamps).

The inaugural Swiss Room Scholarship was not applied for in the 2015-2016 awards cycle. The first SNRC Swiss Room scholarship award of \$4000 was not applied for this past winter. We are getting advice from the NRIEP staff and other friends from other room committees on how to maximize the publicity within Pitt on our new award. We are told it is NOT unusual for a first time award to be overlooked the first year it is offered. Our annual scholarship appeal to our donor base at year-end 2015 was once again successful and enabled us to offer the \$4,000 scholarship from current-use funds, allowing our endowment to continue to roll over accrued interest. David Downey or Cristina Langnese of the NRIEP staff will be at our April 23 meeting to offer ideas. The Swiss Scholarship funds stand at around \$51,500 in the Endowment account and almost \$11,000 in the Agency (current use) account.

Reporting on a few physical plant issues regarding the Swiss Room:

1. The antique medieval door handle, a final piece of the Swiss Room construction, is in the office waiting for installation by the Pitt carpenters.
2. The Graubünden chair back legs are being repaired. This is the third chair in the 4 years since our room dedication that has been damaged by a student trying to tilt back on the back legs only. The Pitt carpenters have done a fantastic job fixing and strengthening the other chairs, so we expect the Graubünden chair to be back in action soon!
3. A few trim molding sections in the decorative areas of the ceiling have fallen down as the glue has dried out. We have seen a few instances of contractor's use of inferior product in the window holders and in these ceiling molding areas over the past few years, and the Pitt carpenters have fixed the issues using glues recommended by Richard Sink, our room woodworker. The dryness of the room in the winter heating season has been a concern since the room was constructed and Richard is urging Pitt to consider a humidifier being installed in the benchwork to be used over the winter to prevent the wood from shrinking so much due to dryness.

Gallatin Portrait to be Added to Back Wall of Swiss Room? The SNRC was considering this to be added to the back wall portraits. However, University policy states added portraits are not allowed once the room is dedicated, so we will not be moving on this initiative. We are free to place educational materials about Gallatin in the display cases at any time, and currently a spread about Gallatin from the book on Swiss immigration in the display case (loaned by Dr. Kunz) is open to a Gallatin image.

Swiss Room Holiday Decorating Day Nov 7, 2015 and Un-decorating Day January 16, 2016: Fred & Nancy Carlson decorated the Swiss Room in November and Fred un-decorated in January. *We once again express our appreciation to the Quo Vadis volunteers for their efficiency service and help.* We urge the greater Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh community to bring forward Christmas decorations from ALL the Cantonal traditions throughout the country—contact Nancy Carlson 412-856-0982 to

discuss and donate your decorations to the cause. The third weekend in November is always when the room is decorated and the Martin Luther King Jr. weekend in January is when the rooms are un-decorated.

Two Swiss Cultural Offerings are being planned, and the greater Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh community will be invited with plenty of time to plan to come:

A presentation on growing up in multi-lingual Switzerland, offered by Beatrice Hook, and a Swiss movie documentary feature on the effects of modernity on traditional alpine shepherd life, moderated by Evelyn Ruffing, are being planned in the Swiss Room with dates still TBD. The first one may be scheduled as soon as this fall 2016. A social/food component will hopefully be part of the event. David Downey or Cristina Langnese, our two main contacts within the NRIEP, will be at our April 23 SNRC meeting to meet with the committee and advise on this process.

The SNRC is having their annual meeting on Saturday, April 23 in the Swiss Room.

60% of our member dues have already been paid as of January 2016. If you want to join the SNRC, dues are only \$25 (family), \$15 (individual), or free (students). Contact Chairman Kunz at hwk1@verizon.net if you are interested in joining. Our Swiss Room committee now stands at 18 members.

Our noted woodworker, **Richard Sink**, suffered a mild stroke in December and after a couple days in the hospital in Morgantown, he was sent home, recovering nicely, taking aspirin. His prognosis is excellent. Richard is 63 and sends his best wishes to his S-ASP friends.

S-ASP Treasurer's Report:

Operating Fund Cash 12-31-14	\$ 10,717.30
2015 Income	\$ 3,521.00
2015 Expenses	\$ 2,495.74
Operating Fund Cash 12-31-15	\$ 11,742.56
Pestalozzi Fund Cash 12-31-15	\$ 3,058.00
Total Cash 12-31-15	\$ 14,800.56

Lebendige Traditionen / Tradition vivantes / Tradizioni viventi / Tradiziuns vivas

Whitsunday – Pfingstblitter (Pfingstblütter, Pfingssprützli)

Early in the morning of every Whitsunday (Pentecost Sunday), the forests of Ettingen, Sulz and Gansingen (in the cantons of Aargau and Basel-Landschaft) are populated by scores of young men scavenging for foliage to tailor and dress themselves in. Fully disguised as bushes, they make their way back to the village. After the church service they roam the area, yelling and whooping. In many places the men show their respect by bowing, and the celebration is accompanied by heavy drinking. In earlier times it was the human bushes that were dunked in the fountain at the end of the festivities, but over time the tables have turned as those bushes began putting their attackers in the fountain instead. Nowadays they try to splash onlookers with wet branches, with young women being their particular target. Finally the foliage-clad men take a fountain bath themselves, afterwards enjoying food and drink. [Pentecost Sunday is the seventh Sunday after Easter and will be celebrated on May 15 in 2016.]



Sulz, 12 June 2011: The Whitsun bush being helped through the village. © Karin Janz



*Ettingen, 2003: Female onlookers risk more than a few splashes --- they are thrown into the fountains.
© Markus Christen*



In Ettingen, the Whitsun bushes enjoy splashing water at their audience, particularly its female members, as they make their way from fountain to fountain. © Theodor Strübin

For more information on the Living Traditions in Switzerland, go to www.lebendige-traditionen.ch

SWISS-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH
SPRING FONDUE PARTY REGISTRATION FORM

Date: Sunday, April 10, 2016

Time: 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Place: Teutonia Männerchor, 857 Phineas Street, Pittsburgh

Price: \$20.00 per person / \$10.00 Children 12 & Under

- Swiss Fondue, Bündnerfleisch, ad a cold buffet with a variety of Swiss and other deli meats and cheeses
- Tombola --- **please bring raffle prizes!**
- Fondue pots will be provided, but please feel free to bring your own!

Please return the below form by **Tuesday, April 5**, with check payable to the "Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh", to:

Lyndall Huggler
908 Fairview Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

(please email Lyndall at lynbeth@msn.com
by Tuesday, April 5, for any late registrations)

S-ASP SPRING FONDUE PARTY REGISTRATION FORM

Name

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____