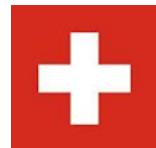




# Switzerland



**NEWSLETTER OF THE SWISS-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA**

**Volume 32, No. 2**

**Winter 2023**

## Table of Contents:

**Page 1 –S-ASP Events & Board**

**Page 2 – President’s Report, General Assembly Meeting Notice, Nationality Day Picnic**

**Page 3 – Picnic cont’d**

**Page 4 – Riis Birthday Celebration**

**Pages 5-6 – Scholarship Awardees**

**Page 7 – Living Traditions: Alpine Saddlery / «Sennensattlerei»**

**Page 8 – Nationality Room Christmas Décor / Holiday Open House**

**Page 9 – Nat Rm cont’d, Member Spotlight: Albert Flury**

**Page 10 – Member Spotlight cont’d**

**Page 11 – Christmas Luncheon Registration Form**

**Page 12 – Membership Renewal Form**

**Page 13 – Swiss Nationality Room Scholarship Legacy Form**

<b>S-ASP EVENTS</b>	
December 2 12-2	<u>Christmas Luncheon &amp; General Assembly Meeting</u> Teutonia
December 3 12-4	<u>Nationality Room Open House</u> Pitt Cathedral of Learning
July 30 2023	<u>Swiss Nationality Day Picnic</u> Richland Township Barn
TBA 2024	<u>Spring Luncheon</u>
TBA 2024	<u>Swiss Nationality Day Picnic</u>

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## **Grüezi, Bonjour, and Bon Giorno!**

Since our last newsletter, the Society has come together twice in celebration. In late July, we continued our annual celebration of 1. August, Swiss National Day, and enjoyed traditional Swiss food and events like Steinstossen. In October we came together again for an inaugural celebration of Paul Riis, a Swiss-born landscape architect who was the first director of Allegheny County Parks and responsible for some of their most attractive features. We were joined in celebration by members of the Paul Riis Legacy Preservation society and the Swiss Nationality Room, and together we enjoined raclette and other Swiss delicacies. Many thanks to the volunteers and our attendees who made these events such a success!

**On December 2, 2023, we will come together again at the Teutonia Männerchor for our annual Christmas luncheon. In addition to the traditional German-style luncheon, there are rumors of an appearance from St. Nikolaus and a performance by the children's choir. Be sure to send in your RSVP and join us in celebration!**

**Winter brings some of my fondest memories of Switzerland: the twinkling lights hung in decoration on the streets, the smell of roasted almonds and hazelnuts, and Christmas markets in snow-covered streets. It should come as no surprise that a country famed for its Alps would have such strong associations with the winter season, and we would like to hear more about our members' connections, too. Starting with this newsletter, we hope to feature one of our members'**

connections to Switzerland. Perhaps it's a favorite relative, stories passed down through generations, a meal shared at family celebrations, or time spent in-country. No matter what it is, we would like to hear from you! More information on how to participate is available from Ellen Porter.

**As we enter into this season of celebration, let's continue to celebrate the connection to Switzerland that brings us together!**

**Mit freundlichen Grüßen,  
Joseph Schaeffer  
President**

## **Notice of Annual Meeting of General Assembly**

The 2023 annual business meeting of the General Assembly of the Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh will be held in conjunction with the Christmas Luncheon at the Teutonia on December 2, 2023. The General Assembly will elect directors and officers for 2024. Moving forward, we plan to begin hosting an annual Spring Luncheon as we did prior to Covid. We will begin to once again hold our business meeting and elections at this event in the Spring.

## **2023 SWISS NATIONAL DAY PICNIC**

We hosted 62 guests and enjoyed beautiful weather for our annual National Day Picnic at the Richland Park Barn. It was a pleasant afternoon of fun and games, food, and fellowship. Musical entertainment was provided by the Schweizer Männerchor Helvetia. Enjoy more info and pictures from the event on the following page...

## 2023 Swiss Nationality Day Picnic



< Pictured Left: Men's Steinstossen participants. Winner Rick Carlson holds the Stein (18 feet 10 in).

Winner Meg Markley (12 ft 4 in) holds the Stein with other female throwers (including youngest participant, Audrey Porter, with an impressive throw of 13 inches!)

The Schweizer Männerchor Helvetia provided a moving performance including the Swiss National Anthem.



>Pictured Right: Children hard at work creating Swiss cow artwork featuring mini Swiss flags and tiny functional metal 'cow bells'

Our other picnic winners were Evelyn Ruffing, who guessed the weight of the watermelon, and Bruce Kuenzi who guessed the number of peanuts. Rob and Ellen Porter won the water balloon toss.

## Paul Riis Birthday Celebration



The Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh joined with the Swiss Nationality Room Committee and the Paul Riis Legacy Preservation Volunteers to sponsor a birthday celebration for Paul Riis on October 1, 2023 at 4:00 PM in South Park. Paul Riis (1876-1944) was a Swiss-born landscape architect who served as the first director of Allegheny County Parks from 1928 to 1932. He designed numerous nature-inspired features in both North Park and South Park, including the fully restored Cascades, a group of stone-rimmed pools near the Forbes Pavilion where we held the event.



Fifty attendees including twelve children enjoyed sampling some Swiss foods including Raclette, Fondue, chocolate, and Swiss cookies. Many guests contributed delicious side dishes and dessert items. Anne Oyler, the leader of the Paul Riis Legacy Preservation

Volunteers, told us the background of her small grassroots volunteer organization that works under the direction of South Park rangers to preserve and maintain many Riis-designed structures in the park. Lyndall Huggler, chairman of the Swiss Nationality Room Committee, spoke about the background of the Swiss Room, dedicated in 2012, and noted that three Pitt students were able to study in Switzerland during the summer of 2023 with Swiss Room scholarship backing. Also, Lyndall highlighted the upcoming Holiday Open House in the Cathedral of Learning on December 4, 2023, and the North American Swiss Singing Alliance Sängerfest which will be held in Pittsburgh in the summer of 2024. Joseph Schaffer, president of the Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh, told the attendees about the organization's traditional Swiss National Day picnic and Christmas luncheon, and encouraged attendees who are interested in Swiss culture and activities to join the group and to follow the Facebook page "Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh." To recognize Paul Riis' birthday, event participants sang "Zum Geburtstag Viel Glück," and children colored drawings of Paul Riis, a bison, and the Cascades.



*"Parks are primarily intended to counteract the ill effects of city life, to gratify tired eyes and minds with the grace and beauty of nature; fill strangling lungs with pure, fragrant air of grasslands, forest and growing things; delight ringing ears with the soothing music of singing waters and the lyric carol of wild birds, that mind and nerves may relax and unbend, revive and refresh themselves and gather bodily strength, assurance and fortitude of soul".*

- Paul B. Riis

## Summer 2023 Swiss Scholarship Awardees: Final Reflections & Poster Showcase

On October 24 the NRIEP (Nationality Rooms and International Exchange Programs) scholarship program held a poster showcase for all of their Summer awardees. The three winners of the Swiss Nationality Room scholarships, Pitt nursing school undergraduates Leah Kohlmayer, Kayla Cobb, and Maple Snow, presented posters summarizing their experiences in the “Healthcare Delivery in Switzerland” program. Below are some reflections of their time in Switzerland.



“The most interesting part to me was learning how healthcare in Switzerland differed from what is done in America. The best example of this is when we went to a psychiatric clinic in Basel, which was also my favorite visit of the trip! The facility itself was beautiful and had lush grounds with gardens and animals, which they said was to promote comfort and peace for their clients. I would describe this facility as less of a hospital stay, and more of what Americans would view as a “wellness retreat”. They have an open door policy, allowing patients to roam the campus as they please and interact with the staff and other patients. They have access to gardens and the kitchen as well as animal therapy. The facility has goats, sheep, guinea pigs, and rabbits on site for the patients to interact with as a form of therapy and relief. There are still standard psychiatric hospital schedules, like group therapy, meal times, and individual therapy. The facility focused more on nature and holistic wellness rather than just throwing medication at patients to solve their problems like is often done in America, and it truly made an impact on me.” – Leah Kohlmayer

“...I also liked the quietness of Swiss culture. When I walked on the streets there was no loud music playing from cars, no one had removed their muffler, the trams are electric and most of the trains run underground when entering the cities- all of which help reduce the amount of extraneous noise. I found Switzerland the most peaceful, welcoming and home-like place I have ever visited. I am looking forward to returning in the future whenever I have the chance- ideally as soon as possible and for as long as possible.”

– Maple Snow (right)



“One of the most rewarding moments from my time abroad was the cultural exposure. I believe it is extremely important to step outside your own culture and experience others once in a while. It is not only makes you more empathetic and respectful, but it opens your eyes and allows us to celebrate our similarities and differences. I was very grateful to have this experience in Switzerland as it allowed me to see healthcare in a different light, and take these differences to incorporate in my own practice. It was so rewarding to have the opportunity to be educated and be culturally exposed.” – Kayla Cobb (left)

## Living Traditions

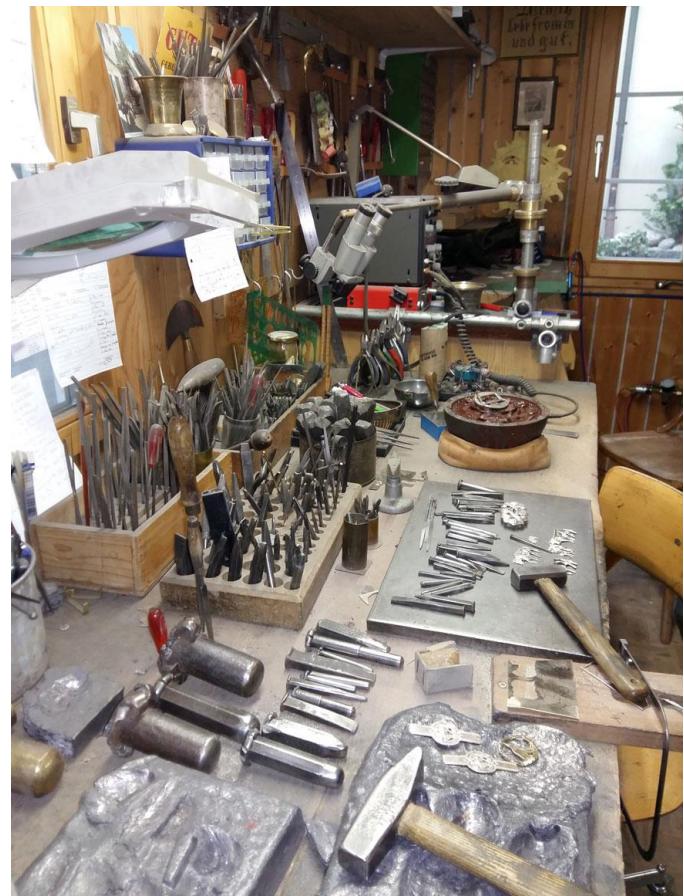
### **Lebendige Traditionen / Tradition vivantes / Tradizioni viventi / Tradiziuns vivas**

#### **Alpine Saddlery / «Sennensattlerei»**

Sennensattlerei (Alpine saddlery) is the term used for the work of the artisans who decorate leather products for farmers, dairymen and their livestock with brass fittings and coloured embroidery. Artisans painstakingly craft straps with bells for bulls, cows and goats, and elements for the traditional costume of dairymen and women, drawing on traditional motifs, figures and ornaments that are characteristic of Alpine farm life. Each Alpine saddler has his or her own 'handwriting' which is expressed in his or her way of drawing and engraving. This craft has been practised in Appenzell and in Toggenburg for generations. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it developed into a trade. From the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards, with the rise of tourism, artisans started to produce souvenirs and fashion accessories in addition to traditional Alpine saddlery products. These more recent products are inspired by the saddlery items, but have new uses. For example the Alpine or Appenzell belt ('Chüeliguert' - decorated with small metal cows), which is decorated with ornaments and figures similar to those on the braces worn in the traditional Alpine dairyman costume, has become iconic. The diverse artisanal skills involved in the trade are strongly linked to other traditions of the region; however, their preservation hinges on a steady flow of innovation and further development.

Above Right: Set of three cow bells 'I.A.K., 1947' by Johann Baptist Fässler (1893–1969)  
© Museum Appenzell

>Right: Roger Dörig's tools (Appenzell, 2017)  
© Margrit Gmünder



For more information on the Living Traditions in Switzerland, go to [www.lebendige-traditionen.ch](http://www.lebendige-traditionen.ch)

## **NATIONALITY ROOMS at the UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH: All decorated for the Holidays and Waiting for You and Your Families to Visit the Swiss Room!**

Saturday November 11 saw the team of Lyndall Huggler, Philip and Augusta Bottonari, and Fred and Nancy Carlson decorate the Swiss Nationality Room for the Holidays. Saint Nicholas Day (Samichlaus), Christmas and Escalade are the three main dates of note showing Swiss celebration during this time of year, and all are noted in the displays. From now through mid-January 2024, all the Nationality Rooms (the program was founded in 1926 and our Swiss Room was dedicated in 2012) are decorated for the holidays and are a stunning tour site for holiday visiting for you and your families and out-of-town guests. Come see these 'unique-in-the-world' treasures, especially the Swiss Room!

With Pitt students largely off campus between mid-December and January 7, this is the perfect time while you are entertaining visitors for the holiday to tour these rooms. Go to this website <https://www.nationalityrooms.pitt.edu> and you can reserve a time and date of your choosing for any size group you can bring with you! There are small admission fees and according to the website calendar there are no tours on Dec 19, 24, 25, 26, 31, January 1, 2 (but all these days except Christmas and New Years Day you can do self-guided tours). At least make sure you and your out-of-town visitors come into Oakland and see the Swiss Room (who Heidi Novak, the wife of the Austrian Committee Chairman Jozef Novak said "The Swiss Room will be the BEST!"



The Swiss Room in all its glory with the bay window area and tree in the back of the photo.



(left) Christmas tree decorated with authentic Swiss (mostly hand-made) ornaments.  
(below) Display case #2 decorated for the Christmas Holidays with natural and handmade pieces.



## Member Spotlight: Albert Flury

Albert came to Pittsburgh in 1947. He was Nancy Flury Carlson's father and Fred Carlson's father-in-law, and grandfather to Ellen Porter and Rick Carlson. He was born in Solothurn, Switzerland, on January 2, 1923. When he was only three years old, his father, also named Albert Flury, died of tuberculosis. So little Albert was left with his older sister Margrit and his mother, Blanche. Together with Blanche's mother, they lived above a tavern that Blanche and her mother operated in order to make a living. Albert and Margrit would sometimes play piano and dance for guests, who tossed coins to them afterwards. Albert entered a tool making technical program, and later served in the Swiss Air Force in Geneva.



After World War II, he went to America on the Queen Elizabeth ocean liner.



Albert on the leftt, aboard the Q. Elizabeth

After landing in New York, he took a train to Pittsburgh. Why Pittsburgh? Well, his aunt Marie lived in Pittsburgh with her husband Werner Schneider (below, right). Werner operated a beauty shop in East Liberty and they owned a home in the Friendship area of Bloomfield. Werner Schneider was one of the founding members of the Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh, and his name is listed on the Articles of Incorporation signed November 4, 1966. Werner and Marie's house had three large floors. They rented the first floor to a professor at the University of Pittsburgh, who in turn rented a room to one of her students, Marion Schumacher. They had their nephew Albert living up on the third floor.



Marion and Albert must have passed each other on the front porch enough times to fall in love, because they got married in 1952. They had two children. Their son Albert, later nicknamed Thom, went to live in Switzerland & work for Swissair for several years. There he met Marisa, who had come from Italy, & they got married. They had two children, Marc & Denise, who now have children of their own. Their daughter Nancy grew up and married Fred Carlson, & had their two children, Ellen & Rick. Marion passed away in 1986, & both Ellen and Rick were born after that so they never got to know her. But they knew Albert very well & spent a lot of time with him when he came back to live with Nancy & Fred in 2014. Albert became quite a jokester in his later years, and although none of "Nonno's" great grandchildren met him, they speak of him fondly and often retell his jokes.

When Albert came to Pittsburgh, he was quickly hired by Westinghouse & became a machine designer. He moved several times to advance his career, which was focused on manufacturing engineering & metal forming. He lived in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Ohio, & Missouri. He could repair or improve just about anything, from his car, to felling trees, repairing washing machines, & even building new rooms in our house. He spent his final years in Monroeville and passed away on September 5, 2016.

## **SWISS-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON REGISTRATION**

**Date: December 2, 2023**

**Time: 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

**Place: Teutonia Männerchor, 857 Phineas Street, Pittsburgh**

**Price: \$25.00 per person / \$10.00 Children 12 & Under**

**Please make plans to attend the annual Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh Christmas Luncheon and Annual General Meeting at Teutonia! Please arrive punctually, as the Kinderchor is planning to do a short concert of German Christmas songs at noon!**

**The luncheon will feature Teutonia's traditional buffet. Coffee/soft drinks included; alcoholic beverage available for separate purchase. Price includes sales tax and gratuity.**

**After the luncheon, we will have our annual business meeting. We will not be having a Tombola, but please feel free to bring donations for the Swiss Nationality Room Scholarship Fund!**

**Please email (ecarlson118@gmail.com) or call/message (412-335-9659) Ellen Porter to register, by Thursday, November 30, so that we can confirm with Teutonia our estimated attendance. Payment can be made on the day of the event (cash or check payable to the “Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh”).**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL NOT BE A TOMBOLA THIS YEAR!**

SWISS-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH 2024 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Please remit your membership dues for 2024 with this notice!

We look forward to another year of activities that will give us the chance to connect with our Swiss heritage and culture.

Please remit your \$15.00\* dues payment (check payable to Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh) by January 31, 2024, to:

Richard Engel  
SASP Membership Secretary  
5713 Wesleyann Drive  
Gibsonia, PA 15044-9448

*\* You also have the option to become a Life Member upon payment of \$300.00 (which may be paid in four annual installments of \$75.00).*

Also, please let us know if you can help with: Board of Directors / Auditors / Folk Festival / Swiss National Day Picnic / Christmas Luncheon / Events Helper / Publicity / Newsletter / Website / Swiss Singers / Swiss Nationality Room / Membership Recruitment / Anything Else That Floats Your Boat! Thanks!

Enclosed are my Swiss-American Society of Pittsburgh dues (\$15.00\*) for calendar year 2024.

(\*optional \$300.00 for a new life membership, which may be paid \$75.00/year for 4 years)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Family Members at this

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ address or at college (name / age): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s):

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I am willing to help the SASP in the following ways:

## **Leave a Swiss Legacy – *in Pittsburgh!***

Thanks to the generosity of many donors, the Swiss Nationality Room Scholarship has sufficient funding to allow the University of Pittsburgh to award one scholarship each year to help a Pitt student realize their dream of living and learning in Switzerland.

Yet there will undoubtedly be years in the future when the awarding of a larger or multiple Swiss Room Scholarships will be highly desirable given the quality and needs of our student applicants.

**Consider helping to make that possible by including a gift to the Swiss Room Scholarship in your will.**

Sample wording for your will: *I give and devise to the University of Pittsburgh – of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15260, the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be used for the support of the Swiss Nationality Room Scholarship Fund.*

When considering charitable giving, you should talk with your tax, legal, and financial advisors.