



# Switzerland

NEWSLETTER OF THE SWISS-AMERICAN SOCIETY OF PITTSBURGH, PA

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## Our New Members

Our current membership is 198. The following new members have been added to the roster:

Rev. John L. Sweitzer

Joseph and Lesley Troy

Alfred and Elizabeth von Arx

Norbert and Eleanor Wagner

We welcome them all to our Society and look forward to meeting them at one of the forthcoming events.

The Society extends its sympathies to the families of

Paul Bucher

Dr. Robert Sutton

members who have passed away.

*Trudy Kuenzi, Membership Secretary*

## Forthcoming Events

When you receive this newsletter the time will have arrived for our traditional August First summer picnic. It will take place on Saturday, July 30 at the Rose Barn in North Park. The program will consist of games for children and adults, including the Steinstossen. The traditional dinner of bratwurst, sauerkraut; potato salad with beer, coffee or soft drinks will be followed by the tobola and a display of three Fahnen Schwinger. Ed Hrabel's band

will provide dance music and this year there will be three different dance competitions. At 7 PM there will again be a lampion parade for the children. Once again, it will be a memorable event with fun for everybody.

For October 1st a bus trip is planned to attend the Swiss Festival in Sugar Creek, Ohio. This will be a one day trip to participate in the festivities of a neighboring Swiss society.

You should also mark your calendar for the annual Christmas dinner; this year it is taking place on December 4. Look for fliers and future newsletters for details to these events.

## 1994 Spring Luncheon

The annual business meeting and Spring luncheon was held on April 30, 1994 at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association in Oakland. Thirty eight members attended. An attack of the flu made it impossible for President Rolf Kuehni to participate and the meeting was presided over by Vice President Joseph Gigandet. Bruce Kuenzi gave the invocation. After a delightful luncheon, the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Board of Directors

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were read by Secretary Grace Heer-Hayes. Reports of the Membership Secretary Trudy Kuenzi and the Treasurer Florence Jacob followed.

Consul Heinz Kunz informed about developments in Switzerland as well as provided information about cultural events involving Swiss artists. Director Conrad Ostertag presented information about the forthcoming Saengerfest 1994 which will be held July 7 - 11 in Ottawa, Canada.

The highlight of the meeting was a tour of the Nationality Classrooms in The University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning. Participants were impressed by the beauty and historical relevance of these rooms and the stories and general information connected with them.

*Grace Heer-Hayes, Secretary*

#### **Members of Society Participate in Pittsburgh Bicentennial Parade**

A three-country group of Austrians, Germans and Swiss created a float and participated in the Founders Fest Parade on April 23 in Pittsburgh. There were three Fahnenchwinger doing a terrific job: Vice President Gigandet and his daughter as well as Alphonse Murer. Unfortunately, the Swiss flag did not get recognized by the reviewing stand.

*Betty Montgomery*

#### **Swiss-American Historical Society**

The SAHS, founded in 1927 and reactivated in 1964 unites people interested in the involvement of Swiss and their descendents in American life. The society has published several books of genealogical and historical interest. Its publication, the SAHS Review, is

published three times a year. Membership is open to all and is \$25/year for individuals. If you are interested, contact Prof. Erdmann Schmocker, 6440 N. Bosworth, Chicago, IL 60626.

#### **Swiss Radio International Offers New Programs**

The government supported Swiss Radio International has begun as of June 6 a new program service with a one-hour program that is sent continuously and changes once a week. In the first half hour news and opinions are broadcast while in the second half hour various feature programs involving many aspects of Swiss life are presented. The English language broadcasts can be heard on shortwave radio at 7.56 MHz.

#### **Swiss Voters Continue on the Go-it-Alone Path**

Recent rejections by Swiss voters of proposals for the participation of a small Swiss force in peace keeping operations of the UN and the simplification of naturalization of young foreigners living in Switzerland have shown again that they are not in favor of any developments that smack of weakening of Switzerland's neutrality and of increased levels of immigration. While Austria recently voted with a good majority to apply for membership in the European Union, there is no indication that Swiss voters are ready to do so anytime soon.

#### **Swiss Participation in the World Soccer Championships**

An unusually talented Swiss national soccer team participated in the 1994 World

Championships in the U.S. It was the first time since 1966 that a Swiss team had successfully passed the preliminary rounds and the first time since the 1954 championships that the Swiss won a match in the championships. After a difficult 1:1 against the U.S. in the sweltering Detroit stadium, they suprised everybody with a 3:0 win over Romania. However, from there on it went downhill. In the third game of the first round Switzerland lost 0:2 against Colombia. Nevertheless, they made it into the second round with the second-best standing in Group A. Their first opponent in Round 2, however, was Spain. Despite the loss in this game, Switzerland can be proud of having advanced so far in a tournament in which, say, England and France could not participate.

### **Yodeling Invades Swiss Rock Music**

Swiss yodeling and up-to-date rock music have been combined on a just released compact disc. Genuine yodeling has been mixed with electronic rock music, cowbells and alphorn music to create a new dance sound that has young Swiss people all excited.

### **Alpine Transportation by Pack Animals**

Since Roman times 2000 years ago and until the beginning of the 19th century the main transportation mode for goods across the Alps has been by pack animal. The first written regulation of this transportation business dates from 1237. If you lived in the area, owned land and had beasts of burden you could participate in this trade. The trip across the St. Gotthard (only one of several from North to South) was about 35 miles from Lake Lucerne to Airolo on the southside. The vertical rise was about 2 miles. Persons active in this

business would pick up goods at a relais station (a 'Sust'), convey them either all the way, or to the next relay station, that was about 4 hours away. In the latter case, goods were transported back on the same route for an 8 hour workday. Transporters going all the way would take two full days for the trip in one direction. Pack horses or mules carried up to 400 lbs a piece of goods on special saddles on their sides and back.

The materials transported were textile products such as silk from the orient, wine, spices and other rare materials or foods, as well as salt. Toll had to be paid along the road at different places. The paths were well developed and kept in good state. Many can still be seen today and are being newly developed as walking paths, often with the help of the Swiss army. At the end of the 18th century as many as 800 pack animals were in operation along the St. Gotthard route. Horses and mules were fitted with special shoes to improve their safety on rocky or icy terrain. They wore bells so that in fog or snow they could be heard from a distance. It was a dangerous business, but one in which good money could be made by farmers to supplement their livelihood. Particularly problematical were large snow falls. Special oxen were used to trot a path in the snow along which the pack animals could then proceed.

Some of the oldest bridges in Switzerland were built in dangerous places to shorten the path of the pack transporters. Several hotels and restaurants still in operation along the routes had their beginning as Susts, as exchange places and hostelleries along the paths.

Over the entrance to a chapel in Hospental in the canton of Uri, along the main pack path over the St. Gotthard there is the

following inscription (in translation):  
Here the path separates; friend, where are you  
going? Do you want to go down to eternal  
Rome? Or the other way to holy Cologne, to  
the German Rhine, or far west into the country  
of the Franks?

## Swiss Humor

"How long have you been married?" "This  
time, or counted everything together?"

"Herr Doktor, min Ma bildet sich ii, er sig en  
Wolf. Was seli mache?" "Vor allem defür  
soorge, dass er nid d'Grossmuetter psuecht."