



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 from a woodcarving professional from Helvetia WV that has our hopes very high about finalizing our stretch drive of fundraising 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 6th) and the beginning of Lent (February 25th 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 of 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

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