

THE SWISS AMERICAN

Official Publication of the NORTH AMERICAN SWISS ALLIANCE

Volume 139

June, 2019

Switzerland - a Hiking Paradise

For many good reasons!!!

How many facts regarding hiking in Switzerland are you familiar with?

Walking along all of Switzerland's hiking trails would be the equivalent of going one-and-a-half times around the world!

Switzerland's hiking trail network covers around 65,000 km. For comparison, the whole of Switzerland has "only" 71,400 km of roads and 5,100 km of railway tracks.

The Swiss population spends 162 million hours on hiking trails each year, while 59% of all overnight visitors in summer go hiking at least once during their stay.

Switzerland's obstacle-free hiking trail network is unparalleled in the world. Switzerland boasts 69 obstacle-free hiking routes signposted with a white information panel. These can be accessed by people in wheelchairs or families with buggies - the sheer size of this network of obstacle-free trails is one of a kind in the world.

Switzerland's well-signposted and maintained hiking trails are particularly appreciated by both foreign and local hikers. Signposts at approximately 50,000 spots along the way inform hikers of the type of trail, its final destination and sometimes its estimated duration. All hiking trails are checked on foot each year by more than 1,500 hiking-trail staff, many of whom are volunteers. All signposts were taken down during the Second World War - The Swiss used to be afraid of revealing valuable route information to invading enemies.

The longest hiking trails in Switzerland can be found in the cantons of Graubünden (11,141 km), Bern (9,930 km) and Valais (8,766 km). 10% of all hiking trails are by the waterside, 9% along a river or stream and roughly 1% along a lake.

The Eiger Trail - spectacular two-hour hike takes you along the foot of Eiger mountain.

Hornliweg - located in Zermatt, this two-hour hike offers the best scenery in the country.



Aletsch Glacier Panorama Trail - The glacier is a sight to behold and the trail provides a stunning view.

Creux du Van - fantastic day hike to see this breathtaking natural wonder.

Pizol Lake Hike - alpine hiking in Switzerland at its best, with amazing views all round.

[Photo of Pizol Lake]



**EDITORIAL &
NATIONAL OFFICE**

North American Swiss Alliance
26777 Lorain Road, Suite 321
North Olmsted OH 44070
440-777-7114
naswiss@sbcglobal.net

OFFICE MANAGER
Lynn M. Kosin

EXECUTIVE BOARD

PRESIDENT
Jan Markowski
963 N. Skyline Drive
Seven Hills OH 44131

VICE PRESIDENT
Donald Robison
365 Sheffield Street NE
N. Canton OH 44720

SECRETARY-TREASURER
Lynn M. Kosin
27686 Edgepark Blvd.
N Olmsted OH 44070

ADVISORY OFFICER
Kevin M. Ruedy
5341 Brown Road
Oregon OH 43616

- DIRECTORS -
John J. Jencson
9610 Tilby Road
N Royalton OH 44133

Darlene Kilchenmann
109A 10th Street NW
Strasburg OH 44680

David E. Stucki
609 N Wabash
Brewster OH 44613
Thomas M. Vassallo
1115 Sparrow Run
Streetsboro OH 44241

PRESIDENT EMERITUS
Alois W. Amstutz

STATE OF THE ALLIANCE

It has been an honor to be part of the Alliance Executive Board since 2014, and to be elected as the 24th President of North American Swiss Alliance at the 2018 convention. I am pleased to provide the following state of the Alliance.

The State completed their last review of the Alliance's records as of December 31, 2014. As a result of their examination, in May 2016, the Executive Board agreed to no longer accept applications for insurance outside the states of California and Ohio where North American Swiss Alliance is licensed to transact business. Fortunately, the Ohio Assistant Chief Examiner agreed members of the Alliance were able to purchase insurance for family members living outside of the two mentioned states as long as the purchase was completed in California or Ohio. We have sold over 100 policies representing \$276,000 in coverage since 2014.

The State examiners stated that the Alliance had seemingly become overly dependent on non-board members for decision-making which resulted in non-compliance in some areas of filing. As a result, the Executive Board began a thorough review of processes and searched for the most competent third parties to work with the Alliance. As of January 1, 2017, the Alliance engaged Hudak & Vrana of Euclid, Ohio to prepare quarterly and annual statements in accordance with National Association of Insurance Commissioners and the State of Ohio. John Vrana has years of experience in fraternal accounting and exceptional knowledge of Ohio regulations. Also in 2017, the custody of the Alliance's investments was transferred from Wells Fargo, Pittsburgh to Wells Fargo, Cleveland. This transfer was made after a lengthy search process by the Executive Board. Immediately upon transfer, the new investment officer was able to meet Ohio's requirement of a custody agreement. Phil Hrvatin meets with the Executive Board on a regular basis to discuss market activity.

The 2018 Executive Board has committed themselves to be familiar with the Alliance's constitution and by-laws, policies and procedures, financial and legal situations. This is in agreement with the Corporate Governance Disclosure Act filed annually with the State of Ohio. The Executive Board has an anti-fraud policy, an investment policy, and an impairment policy in place.

There are four additional Directors sitting on the Board of Directors who assist the Executive Board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities by reviewing financial reports to avoid mismanagement of funds. The Directors participated in an on-boarding session with the Executive Board in September, 2018.

As your President, I am pleased to report that 2018 represented the sixth year of an operating gain. As of December 31, 2014, our surplus was \$637,240 (the State requires the surplus to be at least \$500,000). Through the first quarter 2019, our surplus was reported as \$805,881 which can be attributed to the hard work and dedication of the Executive Board.

Jan A. Markowski, President

August 1st

Swiss National Day



Fête nationale Suisse (French)



Schweizer Nationalfeiertag (German)

Di da la festa naziunala (Romansh)

No matter what language, since 1891, the founding of the Swiss Confederation has been celebrated as Swiss National Day. The date refers to a historic alliance concluded in 1291 by the three cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden. This alliance was to become the focal point around which the Switzerland of today was built. Men from these three cantons swore eternal allegiance to one another, promising mutual help and assistance. A representative celebration is staged at the Rütli Meadow in the canton of Uri above Lake Lucerne. It takes place in the same place where the legendary pledge of alliance was pronounced.

United Swiss Society of Cleveland 2019 Swiss National Day Celebration

Thursday, August 1st – 4 pm to 9 pm – Meal at 6 pm

This year's event will again be held at West Creek Reservation - Keystone Shelter, 2277 W. Ridgewood Drive, Parma, Ohio. For a donation of \$18 per person (\$15 for those 62+ & \$8 for children 12 and under): Choice of *Grilled Bratwurst, Italian Sausage, Hot Dogs; German & American Potato Salad; Fruit Salad; Vegetable & Cheese Tray; Strudel*. Special \$3.00 menu for children under 12: *Hot Dog, Chips, Cookie*.

All are welcome to come and enjoy listening and dancing to tunes performed by accordionist Rudi Hermes. And, the gathering will include playing of the taped speech by the Swiss Bundespräsident.

There will be a limited number of 2019 Swiss National Day pins for sale. The pin is made in Switzerland and assembled in social institutions in Eastern Switzerland. Last year's theme "Young Culture in Old Spaces" has been extended and acts as a bridge builder between yesterday, today, and tomorrow and promotes dialogue between the generations.

The Swiss gathering would not be complete with a few games of Jass . . . Bring your cards and playing partners!

Feeling lucky? Each attendee will receive a complimentary door prize ticket and the chance to buy tickets for our 50/50 raffle and drawing for \$1,000 North American Swiss Alliance insurance policy.

Reservations are required to ensure enough food and beverages will be on hand. **Deadline for reservations is Monday, July 22, 2019.** All checks should be made payable to USSOC and mailed to: Lynn Kosin, 27686 Edgepark Blvd., North Olmsted OH 44070



Studying Abroad: An Experience of a Lifetime

By Michael Kosin & Erin Tanner

In the Fall of 2018, we were lucky enough to be able to study abroad in Geneva, Switzerland and call it home for four months. We were able to enjoy the lovely weather from August-December. Lucky for us, Geneva remained very warm while it was quite cold at home. We decided on studying in Switzerland for a multitude of reasons. Our alma mater, Baldwin Wallace University, provided us with a vast amount of options for countries to study abroad in. Geneva stuck out to us first for the language. In Geneva, the locals speak French. Switzerland is very interesting because it is a melting pot of languages. German, French, Italian, and Romansh are all spoken in Switzerland based on geographic location.



We wanted to study in a country where our native language was not spoken, so French seemed like a fun challenge. Secondly, Switzerland is absolutely beautiful and we wanted to explore the beauty of the country (along with the food). Switzerland was also the perfect location to travel Europe! Lastly, we both have family in or near Switzerland. We took advantage of our opportunity to study abroad and chose Geneva as our new home with no hesitancy.

At first, it was difficult to adjust to our new environment, as we were experiencing huge culture shock. Geneva has a mix of both Swiss and French culture amongst the people, and the language barrier was very hard to overcome. We were lucky, however, as we took a French class abroad taught by a professor from France. She was able to help us feel comfortable speaking to locals and she taught us about common mannerisms in Geneva's culture.

Learning how to use the public transportation was a big adjustment as well. Living in Cleveland, we were not used to having such efficient, widespread public transportation so easily available to us. We were able to figure out the trams and trains fairly quickly and we determined one thing; Switzerland's public transportation system is incredible.

The university that we studied at during our time in Geneva was Webster University at Geneva. The university was in the rural part of Geneva, so we had a beautiful commute on the train to class, gazing at the alps and the city of Geneva. Webster is an American university, so all of our classes were in English which was extremely nice.

We lived off of the Rhône River in the city of Geneva and it was incredibly beautiful. We had a really nice balance of city and rural life in Geneva.





Living in Geneva has to be the favorite adventure of our life so far. We were able to indulge in the best food, travel to 16 destinations amongst Europe, experience a new culture, make incredible memories, challenge

ourselves, make life-long friends, and learn about the world.

We left Geneva with an utmost respect for its people and its culture. We both highly recommend visiting Switzerland, as it will not let you down. We were able to travel all over Switzerland, and each city was absolutely breathtaking.

We are already planning our trip back!



Michael Kosin is the son of North American Swiss Alliance Secretary-Treasurer Lynn Kosin. He and Erin Tanner are 2019 graduates of Baldwin-Wallace University.

Fête des 20 Vignerons 19

From 18th July to 11th August

When it comes to celebrating the noble grape, it's the Swiss that really know how to throw a party!

This summer, starting on July 18, 2019, the quiet town of Vevey (a village of less than 20,000) will welcome around 400,000 visitors for the Fête des Vignerons, one of the world's largest wine festivals. This

event pays tribute to the winemakers of Lavaux, overlooking Lake Geneva. It is also an opportunity to taste Swiss-made wines. This three-week wine festival happens once every 20 years. Over the years, the festival has evolved from a one-day event to an all-out extravaganza with live music, parades, costume parties, wine education, and cellar tours.

Did you know Switzerland has more than 200 indigenous grape varieties? For hundreds of years, many of these have been imported by winegrowers all over the world. In Switzerland, the four most cultivated indigenous grapes are Chasselas, Petite Arvine, Humagne Rouge and Cornalin. These varieties of Swiss origin are appreciated by wine connoisseurs worldwide.

The most common variety for white wine is Chasselas, followed by Petite Arvine. For reds, Humagne Rouge and Cornalin are the most common varieties cultivated in Swiss vineyards.

The Chasselas grape is native to the Lake Geneva region and has been recorded since the 17th century. It is the most widely grown white variety in Switzerland. The oldest variety is Petite Arvine, which was first recorded in 1602 and is now mainly grown in Valais. Among the indigenous red varieties, Humagne Rouge was said to be introduced to Valais in the late 1800s from the neighbouring Aosta Valley. Cornalin (traditionally known as Rouge du Pays), also originally from Aosta Valley, is now grown exclusively in Valais.

The World's Longest Staircase is in Mt Niesen, Switzerland

Switzerland is a world leader in many things: innovation, education and even stairways! Did you know Mt Niesen in the Bernese Alps holds the Guinness World Records for longest stairway? The 11,674 steps are enough to climb the Statue of Liberty 33 times!

Located about forty miles south of the Swiss capital of Bern, Mt Niesen is in the Bernese Oberland region of the Swiss Alps. Mt Niesen, often referred to as the Swiss pyramid, offers a panoramic view of Switzerland's magnificent peaks and quaint historical towns of Spiez, Interlaken and Kandersteg. Located at the top of the staircase is the Berghaus Niesen Lodge. This is a traditional lodge is reminiscent of the way life was a hundred years ago. The lodge has a restaurant which redefines the concept of the "best seat in the house", for you as you are literally dinning atop a mountain peak overlooking some of the most amazing landscapes in the world. The staircase produces an amazing optical illusion: when you look at the staircase, the steps seem unending as far as the eye can see. It is therefore no surprise that it has been the subject of many paintings by artists, including Ferdinand Hodler and Paul Klee, who are intrigued by the staircase and the entire region.

Probably the most interesting thing about this record-holding staircase is that it opens to the public only once annually (primarily due to safety reasons). However, if you want to climb the staircase, you are required to sign up for the annual Niesen Treppenlauf race. This year marked the 18th race, held June 14-15, 2019. Five hundred lucky participants, due to its popularity, most likely signed up in June, 2018.

Between May and November, you can take a thirty-minute ride to the top of Mt. Niesen, thanks to the crafty Swiss who built an incredible funicular railway (the Niesenbahn) to access the peak. Construction on the Niesenbahn began in 1906, without cranes or helicopters to assist them. An average of 200 men worked on the funicular and the line



officially opened in 1910. The Niesenbahn carries a maximum of 65 passengers from the Mülönen train station to the peak of the nearby Niesen mountain. The Niesenbahn has a grade of as much as a whopping 69% as it climbs the steep mountain! At the top there is a 360° viewing platform with stunning sunrises, sunsets, and amazing views.

*Check it
Out!*

Our new website:

<https://www.naswiss.com>

You'll find necessary forms, as well as electronic versions of past Swiss American issues.

In Memoriam

Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family and friends of our deceased members. May they rest in peace.

2/2/18	JACQUELYN HOFER	Age 90	Central Branch
2/25/18	JAMES E. HUSER	Age 56	Cleveland Swiss Society
4/27/18	ALBERT BUETSCHLE	Age 80	Milwaukee Swiss American
7/31/18	RICHARD SONCRANT	Age 90	Toledo Swiss Society
8/11/18	MARIE KLEIN	Age 61	Cleveland Swiss Society
9/1/18	RUDOLF SCHAFFER	Age 95	Central Branch
9/12/18	DAVID G. SONCRANT	Age 53	Toledo Swiss Society
9/17/18	JACQUELINE ZAHLER	Age 86	Central Branch
10/7/18	JAMES E. SCHOTT	Age 55	East Bernstadt
10/8/18	DAVID H. JENTGEN	Age 89	Central Branch
10/8/18	JOHN G. OCHSNER	Age 81	Denver Swiss
10/18/18	RICHARD W. HEINTSCHEL	Age 70	Toledo Swiss Society
11/19/18	JOHN J. HOUSE, JR.	Age 79	Central Branch
12/11/18	JUDITH ERLNBACH	Age 65	Central Branch
11/2/18	RICHARD L. LUTZ	Age 85	Toledo Swiss Society
12/14/18	DONALD STUMP	Age 86	Taylor Beneficial
12/19/18	EDWARD LOESSY	Age 66	Taylor Beneficial
2/8/19	ROBERT L. FOX	Age 77	Toledo Swiss Society
2/26/19	GRACE E. CHURCH	Age 87	Central Branch
2/26/19	FRIEDA SCHMUCKI	Age 86	Canton Ladies
2/28/19	CLARENCE B. WERNER	Age 88	Canton Men
3/7/19	ALICE M. AMMON	Age 87	Central Branch
3/7/19	PIA REICHLIN	Age 83	Canton Ladies
4/23/19	ROBERT VOLLERT	Age 84	Central Branch
5/5/19	GLORIA RUGGLES	Age 87	Canton Ladies



PRIVACY POLICY

The Gramm-Leach Bliley Act was instituted in 1999 and became effective November, 2000 to protect the confidentiality and the security of consumer information. The act requires initial and annual privacy notices. These notices can be of a general nature such as this one posted in this newspaper. The notice will also be available in the office of the North American Swiss Alliance in North Olmsted, Ohio and to all our members who request one by mail.

THE NORTH AMERICAN SWISS ALLIANCE RESPECTS ALL OF OUR MEMBERS' PRIVACY AND WE WILL NOT GIVE ANY PUBLIC OR NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION TO ANYONE NOT AUTHORIZED TO RECEIVE THIS INFORMATION.

PUBLIC INFORMATION means information that is lawfully available to the general public from Federal, State, or Local government records, widely distributed media, or disclosures to the general public, that are required to be made by Federal, State, or Local law. NON-PUBLIC INFORMATION means identifiable financial and medical information. It also means any list, description, or other grouping of individuals and publicly available information pertaining to them.

We are a fraternal benefit society that has always been committed to protecting the privacy of its members. There are no affiliated financial institutions or third party non-affiliates which have access to your non-public personal information, except pursuant to your authorization. We **never** sell lists of names and addresses of our members to any vendor of goods or services.

Our policy of protecting the privacy of public and non-public information extends to our former insured that no longer have any coverage with us.



NORTH AMERICAN SWISS ALLIANCE
26777 Lorain Road, Suite 321
North Olmsted Ohio 44070



Authentic German Food, Beer, and Entertainment Thursday-Sunday, August 22-25, 2019

Enjoy Toledo's oldest, largest and greatest ethnic festival! Savor delicious German food and import beer. Experience authentic German music, folk dancing and entertainment. Participate in traditional German contests and feasts. And enjoy lots of fun activities and rides for the kids.

For over half a century, the German-American Festival has been promoting the German and Swiss cultures, generating revenue to support the German and Swiss cultural center and other philanthropic programs in the Toledo area...and providing a great time for visitors of all ages!

Oak Shade Grove - 3624 Seaman Road - Oregon, Ohio

Tickets available on-line: germanamericanfestival.net