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# REGIONAL NEWS

## UNITED STATES

### Editorial

Dear readers/compatriots,

It's time to look forward to summer vacations. If you're thinking about going to Switzerland, consider attending the 99th Congress of the Swiss Abroad. It will be held in St. Gallen from August 18-20. The intriguing theme is "Swiss

Culture: an Export Product?" For more information visit <https://www.swisscommunity.org/en/offers-events/99th-congress-of-the-swiss-abroad-2023-in-st-gallen>

The deadline for articles for the next issue with a US edition is September 12 to be published on October 20.

I wish you a great and safe summer time.

DORIS BERNATH CUNNINGHAM, EDITOR

**Ciao! A California Central Coast Swiss-Italian Gathering! Come celebrate your Ticino roots September 22-24, 2023**

Contact: Denise [deniseheidepriem@yahoo.com](mailto:deniseheidepriem@yahoo.com) 805-455-4697 Facebook group Valle Maggia Families

### NHL Players Win First Ever Swiss Impact Award

The Swiss Consul General in New York, Ambassador Niculin Jäger presented the first ever Swiss Impact Award to the four leading Swiss ice hockey players on the New Jersey Devils. The award recognizes outstanding Swiss achievements in the United States.

Introduced as the "Fantastic Four", Ambassador Jäger acknowledged the shared success of the Swiss NJ Devils players. The Consulate honored Captain Nico Hischier, the first overall draft pick of the 2017 NHL Entry Draft, as a pillar of the team. Jonas Siegenthaler was mentioned as a critical defender of the Devils and a key contributor to the Devils' current success in the NHL. Right-winger Timo Meier, a Swiss top player, joined the Devils recently and has made a name for himself as an indispensable player in the NHL. Akira Schmid was honored for his strong performance as a goaltender.

The team at the Consulate worked in overdrive in the days leading up to the ceremony to create a suitable setting for the occasion, and when the day finally arrived, we were proud, excited and a little starstruck. This first award was presented in the category of sports. It is special how sport, unlike other sectors, has a very inclusive effect. Fans feel honored when their team wins and their compatriots feel proud and celebrate when their athletes succeed. Listening to the ambassador's words, his joy for the successful hockey players shined through.

Nico Hischier said: "It's an honor to receive the award. It is definitely something special, and it shows how much support we are getting from Switzerland. A whole country that supports us. And it's just great to see that Switzerland does things like this." Looking ahead, Jonas Siegenthaler

stated: "Now we are about 12 players in the whole league with four of them in New Jersey. That just shows how Swiss hockey is growing and I hope that we can continue like this in the future."

Thanks to the presence of Swiss TV and NJD TV, along with the large interest of Swiss and local media outlets, many Swiss and Devils fans were able to view the coverage in the days following the ceremony. The Swiss Impact Award has been very popular on social media channels. The players are creating a lot of affinity for Switzerland in the US. We were also able to welcome important decision-makers and official representatives from New York and New Jersey to the Swiss residence on the occasion.

With our best wishes and the Swiss Awards in hand, the "Fantastic Team" eventually departed. The team at the Consulate is looking forward to hosting them again, and celebrating future trophies.

CONSULATE GENERAL OF SWITZERLAND IN NEW YORK  
ROSINA COLAZZO-FRANZESE  
LEAD COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



SRF coverage



NJD coverage



Swiss Impact Awards

From left to right:  
Nico Hischier,  
Jonas Siegenthaler,  
Ambassador Jäger,  
Timo Meier

Photo Copyright EDA

## Northern California: Aelpler Gruppe Swiss Club

Aelpler Gruppe's annual Jass Party and Fondue dinner was hosted on February 26th. The day began with the Jass tournament in which players challenged each other to earn the most points and take home the title of Jass Königin & König. This year, the winners were Mary Lou Haslemann and Joe Beeler. Meanwhile the Fondue Crew was busy making the fondue as well as platters of prosciutto, Landjäger, and olives to go with it. A side salad was served before the hot fondue was brought out and poured into the waiting pots at each table. This year's delicious fondue, made by Arnold Ambiel and his crew was made with gruyere and raclette cheese, as well as other ingredients. Following dinner, a variety of wonderful Swiss items were raffled off. We thank all of those who donated prizes. We also extend a special thank you to all of the volunteers who made the Jass and Fondue party successful. We sincerely appreciate you!

Join us at our upcoming events in Newark, CA

**May 21** - Swiss Benevolent Society Spring Picnic

**August 5** - United Swiss Societies - Swiss National Day

**August 26** - Fall Schwingfest in Newark

**November 5** - Annual Members Meeting

Visit [www.aelplergruppe.com](http://www.aelplergruppe.com) for information on events

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## Northern California: Peninsula Swiss Club

The Peninsula Swiss Club located in the San Francisco Bay Area started off the year with our first Fondue event in three years! We were so excited to bring back this popular get-together. Our club's history was on display for all to see. We had over 38 new members coming to their first club event enjoying music, cheese, and wine. The club continues to get together for established and new events like our popular hiking, wine tasting, and picnic.

On June 4th will be our Semi-annual BBQ! Our talented cooks will be grilling tri-tip and Bratwurst.

Our wonderful members will share various salads and tasty desserts. The outdoor event is always a hit with lots of games and projects for the kids. We plan to have a special tasting of Swiss treats.

Our club has about 350 members currently and continues to grow. Many new families joined just in the last year. We look forward to a great 2023 and thank all of our members who support our club and help bring the culture and traditions of Switzerland to our families.

ERICH SONNBERGER, PRESIDENT  
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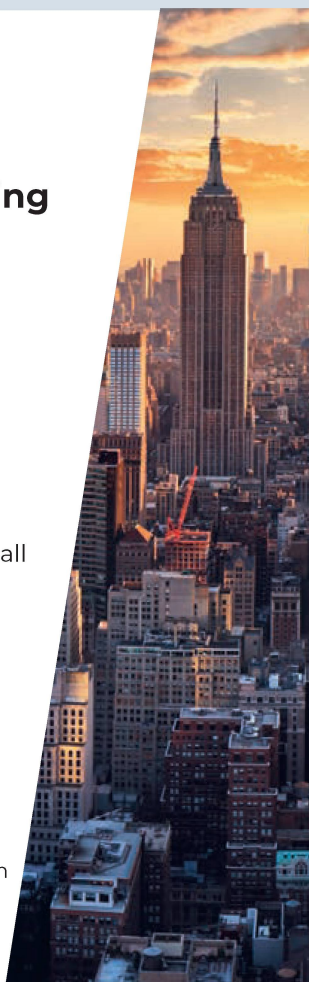


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## Northern California: Swiss Benevolent Society of San Francisco

The Consul General of Switzerland based in San Francisco treated the officers of the Swiss Benevolent Society to Swiss wines and cheeses after our March Board meeting.



Pictured are SBS president Ruedi Sandmeier, third from the right in the back row, behind his wife Suzann. Second from the right is Consul General Balz Abplanalp. Far left is Martin Zaugg, head of Consular Affairs. Other SBS board members, left to right, are John Zeiter, Carla and Doug Twitchell, Ariana Ghelfi, and Marianne Aubert.

We are planning our annual Seniors Luncheon in May at  
Swiss Park in Newark, California.

CARLA TWITCHELL  
[WWW.SBSSF.COM](http://WWW.SBSSF.COM)

## The Maurice Rohrbach Fund for Swiss-American Cultural Exchange

The Maurice Rohrbach Fund for Swiss-American Cultural Exchange (MRF), which fosters friendship and mutual understanding between Swiss and American people, hosted its members and friends in the Greater Philadelphia area for a docent-led tour of Meret Oppenheim: My Exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City. The exhibition featured 200 works by Oppenheim and was organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Kunstmuseum Bern, and The Menil Collection, Houston.

Following the exhibition tour, the new Consul General of Switzerland in New York, Ambassador Niculin Jäger, invited the group for a cocktail reception at the Swiss Residence. A highlight was a generous offering by Executive Chef Yannick Germanier of Swiss cheeses, breads, and wines.



To commemorate the occasion, on behalf of the MRF, President Josephine Burri presented the Ambassador and his wife Gabriela with a “house-warming gift”, an Ambrosia Maple sphere created by Swiss woodturner, Philip Hauser, who is represented by the Museum for Art in Wood in Philadelphia.

Ms. Burri also gave the Ambassador an antique letter opener hand-crafted by descendants of Ernest “Mooney” Warther (1885-1973), who was a Swiss wood carver and knife maker and founder of what is now Warther Cutlery in Dover, Ohio. The letter opener was made possible by MRF Board member Richard Warther and is a rare surviving example of these openers, which have been given as gifts to at least four United States Presidents and countless Congressmen and Senators.

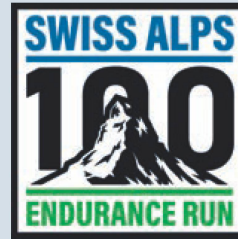
JOSEPHINE BURRI, PRESIDENT  
[WWW.MAURICEROHRBACHFUND.ORG](http://WWW.MAURICEROHRBACHFUND.ORG)

## New York: New York Swiss Gymnastic Society founded in 1884

Our 2023 General Meeting and luncheon was held at our traditional Restaurant in White Plains, NY. The attendance was below the previous years, due to the fact that many of our long-time members are no longer ready to drive their cars too far.

Nevertheless, we spent a few hours reminiscing about the past, but also the future course of our society. The discussion ended with the outlining of our program for this year, which includes, our Jass Tournament, the Spring Outing, an evening listening to our favorite band the “Ancient Ruins” during the summer, a Fondue Party in the fall, ending with a Christmas Party in December.

With this variety of events all members should find one or more to attend despite their busy schedule.



The Swiss Alps 100 trail race offers some of the best trails and views of the famous Swiss Alps. The start is very similar to the Western States 100 with a challenging 4.5 mile climb and an elevation gain of 3,850 feet to the first aid station. All courses now run along the longest glacier in the Swiss Alps, the 14-mile long Aletsch Glacier, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001. It's a real privilege to be there. Along the way, there are three suspension bridges, a large dam, many small villages, and cows to feast your eyes on. The Swiss Alps 100 is also one of only 6 races in the world that is a qualifier for the WS100, HR100 and a preferred qualifier for the BW135.



We offer four different race distances, a Vertical 10k (6,020 feet of elevation gain), a 50k (10,930 feet of elevation gain), a 100k (21,130 feet), and the 160k with an incredible 34,380 feet of elevation gain. Think Hardrock 100, but in Switzerland. We are also the only ultrarunning event to offer a fly division. And of course, kids ages 4 to 13 can come and run a short distance for free.

We've grown a lot since our first race in 2017. We had 50 registrations for our first event, and last year we had 511 runners from 26 countries. This year, we are on track to have over 800 runners from at least 50 countries. We are looking forward to hosting another fantastic event this August.

JAKOB HERRMANN | SWISS ALPS 100 FOUNDER AND RACE DIRECTOR  
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It was a fun afternoon and we were all delighted to see our long-time friends again.

PETER GERMAN  
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**Texas:** Swiss-American Society of Houston

It has been a busy winter and early spring for our Society. On January 22, we held the Annual Membership Meeting and Board Election at the Alliance Française in Houston. We would like to thank the following members, who retired from the board, for their past contributions, and support to the Society: Lilian Tade (past president 2015-2019), Linda Corinth, Debra Pletscher, and Katharina Upchurch. A big round of applause goes also to all the continuing members and the five new additions to the board.

In January we also organized a private guided visit to the Museum of Fine Arts to see the Alberto Giacometti exhibit. Our monthly Jass games have been well attended and are always open to new players. On March 8, in the framework of the French Cultures Festival, we hosted a virtual cooking class, taught by former board members and professional chef Debra Pletscher. We cooked Croûte aux Champignons, a recipe from the Valais. As usual it was very well received not only by the Houston community but also throughout the US. A heartfelt thank you goes to Chef Debra for the demonstration and her husband, Werner Pletscher for filming it.

On April 16 we hosted a picnic at Brazos State Park. This event is a great opportunity for new members and families to meet our board and mingle with fellow compatriots. Our board is also hard at work preparing the Swiss National Day Celebration in Houston.

We invite you to visit our website at [www.swissamericanhouston.org](http://www.swissamericanhouston.org) to join our club or follow us on Facebook and/or Instagram to stay in touch with our events.

Thank you, as always, for being with us!

MAURA FERRERO-BARONI, PRESIDENT  
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Members visiting the Giacometti Exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts



**Florida:** Swiss Club Miami

The Swiss Club Miami has again exciting things planned for this year. We hold our traditional events as well as trying out some new ones.

This year our Board Member, Marco Nageli, hosted a new event for Volunteering. Swiss Club Miami was proud to partner with the Non-Profit Feeding South Florida for a day of giving back to our community on April 8. Families and children were all welcome. Feeding South Florida is committed to serving individuals, families and older adults experiencing food insecurity. Volunteers assisted with the inspecting, sorting, and repacking of donated food. The Swiss Club Miami secured 20 spots for our members to join.



On April 16, we held our Yearly Picnic at the Tropical Park with grilled Swiss sausages and bread, burgers and our traditional pot luck buffet as every family brings their favorite dessert, salad or side dish for all to enjoy. There are activities and a bouncy house for the kids. Swiss Delicatessen like Bratwuerste and Cervelats could be ordered online during the registration process to be taken home after the event.

On July 30, we are planning our Swiss Day celebration (this date is subject to change and the date should be checked on our website at [SwissClubMiami.org](http://SwissClubMiami.org)). Join us for a day of festivities as we demonstrate our traditions and hospitality! We meet at 5 PM at the Bierhaus Plaza for a glass of wine and appetizers. The apéro will be followed by a dinner buffet featuring Swiss specialties. Come dressed in Swiss red & white. Bring your family and friends! Don't miss out on this fun Swiss event and the chance to win exciting tombola raffle prizes! Kids entertainment will be provided and the Swiss "Lampion" lantern parade with our kids will be held after dinner.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at [President@swissclubmiami.org](mailto:President@swissclubmiami.org). I'm always looking forward to meeting new people interested in our Swiss Community and Culture!

NANCY FROHLICH, PRESIDENT  
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## Florida: Swiss American Club of SW Florida

### General Assembly 2023

The 25th Annual General Assembly meeting took place on March 18 at the Fort Myers Country Club. Starting at 5 pm, attendees had time for an apéro and socializing with fellow club members while on a big screen the top “25 destinations of Switzerland” video was highlighting beautiful tourist spots of our home country.

At 5:45 pm, Joe Huber, our president, welcomed the 50 attendees, members and guests. A special welcome was extended to Rene Riedi, our Honorary Consul from Miami and his wife Olga, as well as Christophe Kuhn, a board member of the Swiss American Chamber of Commerce Miami Chapter. One of the businesses of the evening included the election of the board members, of whom all agreed to serve for another 2-year term.

A buffet dinner with roast beef and marsala chicken was opened and the rest of the evening was enjoyed with food, drinks and good company. At this time on the big screen the photos of past events ran in a loop and reminded of the good times we had at our events last year.

VICKI H. BURKHARD, SECRETARY  
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SWISSAMERICANCLUB.COM



Pictured left to right: Urs Brunner, IT Director; Vicki Burkhard, Secretary; Hans Wenger, Vice President; Gemma Huber, Treasurer; Lily Kraft, Events Director; Rene Riedi, Honorary Consul of Switzerland in Miami; Joe Huber, President

### Future events

#### May 24 - Minigolf Challenge

Golfers and those pretending to be golfers can show off their skills and sportsmanship at our traditional minigolf challenge. With minigolf, everyone can be a winner. Followed by lunch.

#### June 24 - Picnic at Lakes Park

We are excited to celebrate another picnic with all of you and look forward to a great participation and a grill full of wonderful meats and other delicious foods. Bring your own.

#### July 30 - 1st of August Celebration at Lakes Park

We will continue our National Holiday event tradition with the popular Bratwurst brunch. Always a fun gathering for the Swiss community.

## Florida: Swiss American Club of Sarasota

“Gruezi” from Sarasota!

Winter brings us the ‘snowbirds’...

Spring brings...well, the ‘Spring-breakers’ of course...

Needless to say, both cause a bit of havoc to the otherwise quiet enjoyment of our daily lives. The increase in traffic is enough to drive the most patient among us up-the-wall; and how about trying to get a reservation in a restaurant; well, you better be planning ahead...like at least 2 weeks ahead. Even the on-and-off presence of the Red Tide wasn’t enough to discourage our visitors. But how about the dreaded ‘BLOB’? Will that phenomenon have an impact on our beaches and tourism?

In case you haven’t heard: “A Giant Blob of Seaweed Is Heading to Florida”.

The mass, known as the great Atlantic Sargassum belt, is supposed to be drifting toward the Gulf of Mexico (that’s us) reaching our shores probably in July. Scientists say the seaweed is likely to come ashore by summer and create a rotten, stinking scourge ... I guess we’ll have to assume a wait-and-see attitude and having no other option, we will have to hold up our noses and ‘grin and bear’.

Our picnics still proceed as planned. On April 2nd members attended our pre-Easter picnic and enjoyed, along with the customary brats, the many salad offerings by member Hans Egg. His variety of salads have become a popular staple of our picnics. Coffee and Osterkuchen were a pleasant sweet ending to the day.

February brought us also moments of deep sadness, We lost a longtime member and dear friend, Dr. Allan Chytrowski. Alan was much loved and will be missed by many.

On the very solemn celebration in the Christian Calendar, we hope that all compatriots abroad had a Happy Easter, Frohi Oschtere, Joyeuses Pâques, Buona Pasqua, Bella Pasca!

IMELDA EGG, VP COMMUNICATIONS  
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**Minnesota:** Twin Cities Swiss American Association (TCSAA)

Since the last issue of the Swiss Review was published, the TCSAA held one of its key events: the Cheese Fondue Party. On February 18th, we celebrated this club favorite at the German American Institute in St. Paul. Our great kitchen team prepared another delicious Fondue, and everyone enjoyed the social time, as we welcomed some new and also longtime members. It's a good sign that the number of new and



young members is growing. We notice participants who attended club events with their parents and are now members in their own right! It also means that our membership is a mix of young and older

people. Members of the Swiss Benevolent Society of St. Paul also attended the event and helped making it a success.

We'll be celebrating the 1st of August Swiss Independence Day on July 29 at the Trechsel's residence in Rockford.

We hope to see many of you at one of the upcoming events.

MARKUS HOESLI, VICE PRESIDENT TCSAA  
[WWW.TCSAA.US](http://WWW.TCSAA.US)

**50th Anniversary Celebration on June 25th**

Our main event of this year will be celebrating the half century mark of the club since its founding by a group of visionaries back in 1973. Our board is working hard on the planning of this celebration. What we can announce is that the chosen location is the Theodore Wirth Chalet in Minneapolis. Theodore Wirth (1863-1949) was a horticulturist, professional park planner and administrator who immigrated to the U.S. in 1888. There is no better place to gather for the 50th Anniversary of the TCSAA, this place has so much Swiss history in Minneapolis. The program will be interesting and we invite Swiss members from the region to the event. Check for the latest event news on our website [www.tcsaa.us](http://www.tcsaa.us) or on Facebook.

**Colorado:** Swiss American Friendship Society (SAFS)

The Swiss-American Friendship Society (SAFS) with more than 200 members is a non-profit organization dedicated to foster and advance friendship and goodwill between the people of the state of Colorado and Switzerland through social and cultural programs. We strive to serve all people having an interest in the two nations.

The first half of 2023 comes with some changes in our board. We have elected a new president, Heidi Tornare, during our yearly assembly and Fondue dinner in February. Our resigning president, Rene Sonderegger, has successfully guided SAFS through the peak of Covid as well as before and after the turbulent period. Altogether, Rene has served on the board for eight years. Rene is going to spend more time with his family and enjoy his grandchildren. He will remain a much appreciated and active member. We all express our gratitude for his time as president and welcome Heidi with open arms. Born and raised in Winterthur, Switzerland, she has still close family ties to her hometown. As the youngest of 8 children, she grew up in a baker's family. Helping in the family bakery/grocery store has taught her how to work and run a family-owned business as she does now in Denver, CO. Being the sales manager of a natural stone company located in Telluride, CO, she is responsible for their nationwide sales and marketing department. With 5 siblings still in Switzerland and 2 brothers in Colorado, it is her wish to ensure that members of the SAFS get opportunities to stay connected with Swiss heritage, traditions, and cultural heritage most members grew up with. Heidi Tornare is inviting the existing and new members to put their fingerprint on the club's events and submit their ideas or wishes for future gatherings to her. She can be reached at [htornare@hotmail.com](mailto:htornare@hotmail.com).

We also have some other new board members who are eager to start planning some traditional events such as a Father's Day Hike in June in addition to the bi-weekly Stammtisch gatherings on both ends of the Denver Metro area. Our August 1st Celebration will be the highlight of the summer.

More details are posted on [www.safs.us](http://www.safs.us)

REGULA GRENIER  
[WWW.SAFS.US](http://WWW.SAFS.US)



New President Heidi Tornare with our chefs preparing the Fondue

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## Louisiana: Swiss American Society of New Orleans (SASNOLA)

New Orleans celebrated Mardi Gras on February 21. Many of our SASNOLA members participate in the various Carnival Krewe activities that take place during the time between Twelfth Night, January 6, and Fat Tuesday. From the better-known parades that pass through the crowded streets of the city, to the lesser known small krewes that parade through more residential neighborhoods, to the Marching clubs, balls and over the top extravaganzas, to simply being a participating spectator on the street during the most wonderful time of the year, Mardi Gras truly offers something for all to enjoy.

The 26th New Orleans French Film Festival was held March 9-19 this year, and included screenings of two French films with Swiss connections. On March 9, opening night of the festival, we were escorted to the Prytania theater by SASNOLA member Janet Darsie, also a member of "The Merry Antoinettes", a local ladies Mardi Gras Krewe who tout themselves as "being cheeky, glamorous revelers of Marie Antoinette's Court". The opening night crowd was also treated to live music prior to *Madeline Collins*, a narrative feature about a French woman living and working in Switzerland.

On March 10th we gathered at St. James Cheese before going to see *The Art of Silence*, a Swiss documentary about Marcel Marceau who was French but had a Swiss connection helping other Jewish people escape into Switzerland during WW2. Honorary Consul of Switzerland in New Orleans, Alexandra Mora, gave opening remarks, welcomed movie goers, and introduced the film. The film screening was sponsored by the Swiss Consulate in Atlanta.

On March 13, prior to the last two 'in person' films of the festival, all French Film Festival attendees were welcomed to a Garden Reception with the Nous Foundation at the BK House & Gardens in the French Quarter. Boasting a bit of Swiss history itself, the BK House was home to merchant and first Swiss Consul to New Orleans, John Merle, his wife, Anais and their three children, Henry, Eugenie and Corrine from 1833-1841.

Coinciding with The French Film Festival in New Orleans in March, the so-called Francophonie, which pays homage to the French language and the cultural heritage of French-speaking countries, is also celebrated here. As French is one of the four national languages of Switzerland and because New Orleans has a rich French cultural and historical legacy, the Consulate General of Switzerland in Atlanta partnered with Alliance Française New Orleans, to promote the French language by screening *La Ligne/The Line*. The film was produced by the Swiss filmmaker Ursula Meier in the partially French-speaking canton of Valais. The family drama was nominated at the Berlinale for the Golden Berlin Bear 2022 in the category of Best Film. The Swiss-Belgian co-production premiered in February 2022 and is currently nominated in five categories for the Swiss Film Award.

For the second time in March, Honorary Consul of Switzerland in New Orleans, Alexandra Mora, also a SASNOLA member, was invited to give opening remarks prior to the film screening. Our President, Don Schwarzenbach, also serves as secretary on the Alliance Française board, and with SASNOLA member Jim Holmes serving as their treasurer, it only seemed fitting that SASNOLA would join in to cosponsor the pre-screening reception with offerings of Swiss wines, meats, and cheeses, Swiss confections and chocolates. With a 'Swiss Swag Bag' raffle sign in sheet, the event not only served as an opportunity to make new acquaintances, but also to promote our Society, and attract new members.

The movie was shown in French with English subtitles, in the backyard garden, under the stars at Alliance Française in New Orleans. It was a lovely ending to a month filled with small group get togethers of Swiss/French movie watching events. We are grateful to The Consulate General of Switzerland in Atlanta, the Consulate of Switzerland in New Orleans, and Alliance Française New Orleans for bringing this all together and making us a part of this delightful event.

Spring has definitely sprung in New Orleans, as our weather begins to show off its absolute best side for New Orleans' highly anticipated festival season throughout early summer.

Happy Spring and Summer!

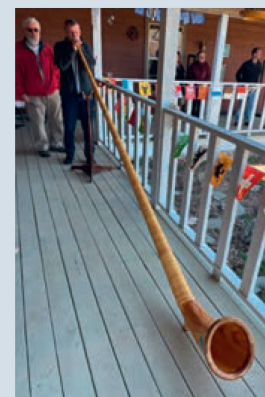
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## Oklahoma: Swiss Club of Oklahoma

As of this year the Swiss Club of Oklahoma has decided to resume its full year activities of various events spread over the year. On March 11, about 25 people met at the house of our members Olaf and Holly Batt in Mounds. Olaf is a well known professional farrier in our State. We enjoyed an excellent Fondue made of Swiss original Gruyere and Italian Fontina cheeses and had a few glasses of white wine; there was nothing left at the end and everyone was happy to have come. Additionally, we enjoyed having member Ernie Loganbill from Independence, KS, bring along a real Alphorn which he built himself in true Swiss skills fashion. A few attendees tried their luck to play this amazing instrument, even though there was a lot of air blown and little music, we had fun with it.



The Swiss Club would welcome new members to join from Oklahoma, South Kansas, and Western Arkansas. Events are usually taking place in Tulsa, but we also explore some interesting places throughout the State of Oklahoma. Please contact us at [Swissclubofok2013@cox.net](mailto:Swissclubofok2013@cox.net)



ANDRE SIEGENTHALER, PRESIDENT



## Illinois: Swiss Club of Chicago

For the Swiss Club of Chicago, the event season 2023 began in full swing (literally) with our annual “New Glarus Ski Weekend”. We have quite a large group of ski enthusiasts in our Swiss Club so we can say “Alles fahrt Schii” at the quaint little ski area called Tyrol Basin (West of Madison, Wisconsin). Big thanks to Ruedi Bucher, our Wisconsin Event Director, who organizes this gathering each year.

The weather was beautiful and the snow conditions were good - what more can you wish for! ... ah yes, one more thing: Landjäger (a Swiss sausage), Swiss cheese and great artisan bread for lunch, organized by Ruedi. Life was pretty good for us Swiss!

Our dear friends, Tony and Esther Z'Graggen from the cheese store “Alp and Dell” in Monroe joined us for dinner as well. Tony delighted us with Yodeling, while Ruedi made the perfect “Kafi Luz” (Coffee with Schnaps) and the kids had fun at their own “Young Swiss Stammtisch”. It was a wonderful evening with great friends!

On Sunday morning, some went back to the slopes, others visited the bakery in New Glarus to get some of those delicious Almond- or Nussgipfeli before making their way home, but not before visiting Tony and Esther to stock up on Swiss cheese and Landjäger.

June 18, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm: Swiss Sunday Brunch at the Lake  
July 29, 4:00 pm - 9:00 pm: Swiss National Day Celebration

Come join us! Check out our website [www.swissclubchicago.com](http://www.swissclubchicago.com) to see our full event calendar.

HORST ZEMP, PRESIDENT  
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## New York: Swiss Benevolent Society of New York

### The Telephone Exercise Class at the Swiss Benevolent Society

As the Covid pandemic lockdown (back in April of 2020) began to limit our members’ freedom to get out, walk and socialize, the SBS decided to experiment with something to address these very important day to day life activities.

Our telephone exercise class, led by Elise Karras, one of our social workers and a certified personal fitness trainer, was launched in May 2020. The focus of the class was (and is) to help people maintain current levels of functioning by engaging in age appropriate and targeted movements.

Many of our Swiss members had been avid walkers throughout their lives. We anticipated the impact of lockdown was a serious one, which would limit mobility and cut back on socialization. There were many Zoom exercise classes during this time, but many of our members were uncomfortable with this platform, in fact, some did not have computer access at home. We determined that everyone was comfortable with the telephone, so we used a conference call model to conduct the exercises. Most exercises are chair exercises which can be done standing, so there is no exclusion as to who can attend.

The class started in May 2020 with 7 members initially with a simple warm up, functional exercises using body weight, balance exercises and cool down. Within the first year, one of our members volunteered to choose a selection of music each week for a segment of movement to a beat and sound. At some point later, another member suggested a meditation before physical exercise, which she offered to conduct. Members were enthusiastic about it, and we incorporated it into the beginning of each class. Concentration and coordination are continually being challenged during the class as we have progressed to moving all planes of body movement. There have been complementary benefits to this long running class. As each exercise is clearly and carefully explained, participants are regularly asked “can you see what I am trying to say”? As a cognitive exercise, this question brings awareness to one’s own body and movement thus it enhances memory and visualization so that the exercise is correctly done. And yet another benefit has been the socialization aspect. Members know one another (after 3 years on the phone) and will often call into the conference call earlier than scheduled in order to chat with one another.

Meeting twice a week for an hour each time, the class continues going strong until this very day in 2023 and we now have 13 participants!

ELISE FEUERSTEIN KARRAS, MSW, CPFT  
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