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# REGIONAL NEWS

## UNITED STATES

### Editorial

Dear Readers,

*I like to share the words of a friend of mine: I always think of New Year's Day as the start of a new book, with every day being a blank page. 2017 has 365 pages. What will you write on those pages? My hope for you is that this time next year, when you look back over those pages, there will be more joyful ones than there will be sad ones.*

■ The elections for the delegates of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) will take place worldwide between January and June 2017. The 140 members are the representative body for Swiss people living in other countries. It is therefore also often referred to as the "Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland". It represents and defends the interests of all Swiss expats in political circles within Switzerland. The CSA therefore plays a key role in protecting the interests of the Swiss Abroad. The delegates serving on the CSA are to be re-elected for the period 2017–

2021. This is why an international call is made to all Swiss citizens abroad who wish to become a delegate of the CSA. The U.S. has 8 delegates.

■ For more information on how to become a candidate, go to <http://aso.ch/de/politik/asrwahlen-2017>

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DORIS BERNATH CUNNINGHAM  
EDITOR

### California: The Ticino Swiss Immigration to California

America is a land of immigrants, and the Ticino Swiss immigrants share many of the characteristics found in other immigrant groups. The first American immigrants were the English in the 17th century, who founded the country. They were followed by the Scots-Irish from Northern Ireland in the 18th century, and then in the half century after America's Civil War, the years 1865 to 1920, masses of immigrants came from all parts of Europe.

Immigration from Ticino began in the middle 1850s and seems to have hit its high point in the period 1870 to 1900. In these years more than 140,000 Swiss came to America, but the Ticino Swiss were only a small part. The Ticino Swiss immigration is estimated at about 30,000 people, mostly men in the early years.

The Italian speaking Ticino Swiss did not mix with the German and French Swiss immigrants, but did mix and intermarry with Italian immigrants. Several million Italians came to America after the Civil War and the Ticino Swiss were considered part of this migration by most Americans because of the similarities in language, region and culture.

But there were important differences. Italians went to the major cities, Ticinesi did not. Italians settled all throughout the American states, Ticino Swiss almost exclusively in California. And so the Ticino Swiss developed a presence in America that was unique to their community.

The Ticino Swiss settled in the rural parts of California and

pursued two types of work: dairy farming and vineyards.

To some degree this was an extension of their lives in Ticino, but not entirely. California in the late 19th century was sparsely populated with miles of rolling hills providing good pasture land for dairy cows and valleys suited for growing wine grapes. A young man could work for a few years and earn enough money to buy some acreage and a few cows, and that is what they did. They called themselves "ranceri", ranchers in English, for the large amount of land they acquired.

Many made some money in California and went back to Ticino to find a wife, or perhaps to help out aging parents. But this also meant that later immigrants would come to a place where family members had already put down roots. After 1880, almost without exception, the Ticino Swiss came to ranches owned by cousins or other Ticino Swiss. Letters were often sent to relatives in Ticino telling of employment opportunities in California.

Because they were in rural California, not in the cities, the first generation immigrants rarely learned English. Their social life tended to revolve around the Church, and other dairy or vineyard people. These immigrants and their children tended to marry other Ticinesi or northern Italians, where the dialects were the same. It was well into the 20th Century before this tie to the "old country" finally died out, and few Ticino descendants today know much about Switzerland or can speak the Ticino dialect.

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## New York: Wilhelm Tell goes West to the Big Apple

On the day before August 1st, Gerry Hofstetter, the famous Swiss Light Artist, unveiled a copy of Tell on Rat Island in New York City. Hofstetter mentioned to the media that he placed Tell in New York to “support Lady Liberty, so they can together strengthen human rights as fundamental values of mankind.”

A few years ago, two Swiss living in New York, Alex Schibli and his business partner, Roland Veit, bought a small island in Long Island Sound in the Bronx. Gerry Hofstetter had the idea of bringing the Tell statue over to the island after he saw a Swiss TV report about Roland Veit and the island. Gerry Hofstetter presented his idea to them and they loved it.

About two weeks before the event the Tell statue arrived in New York where it traveled to the island by a wooden boat. Before he could erect the statue, Hofstetter needed a permit from the city of New York. In order to get the permit, he needed to get an address. Alex Schibli decided the address should be “1291 Wilhelm Tell Square”. This is the official and absolute perfect address.

The event was a big success. About 100 invited people witnessed the unveiling of Tell. You can’t help but get emotional when you see the Swiss flag rising to the Swiss National Hymn.

TEXT UND PHOTOS: ROLAND PABST  
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Tell arrived at his final destination



Members of the Marines unwrapped Tell



Gerry Hofstetter thanks the Island owners Roland Veit (left) und Alex Schibli (right), Eliane Amherd from the Übersee Band in the background



Tell with his son Walter likes his new home - a little bit bigger than the Tells Platte at the lake of Uri and he has its own address



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## San Francisco, California: "Under One Roof" at Pier 17

*New Swiss Diplomacy and Innovation Hub opens its Doors in San Francisco*

Four official Swiss institutions, the Consulate General of Switzerland in San Francisco, swissnex San Francisco, the Swiss Business Hub USA, and Switzerland Tourism, now share a space at the waterfront, literally on San Francisco Bay. Since July, the new offices of the Swiss Institutions are located just a short walk away from the Financial District, the Consulate's previous location. The new "Swiss Pier," or Switzerland at Pier 17, was inaugurated on a sunny weekend in September with a three day festival.

With three days of programming, the Grand Opening Festival of Switzerland at Pier 17 (September 23-25, 2016) offered participants a wide range of events and activities. With workshops, concerts, expert talks, cooking experiments, tours, games, and of course an official inauguration with important stakeholders, the opening of the Switzerland at Pier 17 was celebrated in grand style. With the overall theme of the future, the Grand Opening events engaged not only the future of diplomacy, but also the future of basic human activities. This being San Francisco, program tracks were arranged under hashtags: #EAT, #THINK, #TALK, #LIVE, #SLEEP, and #WORK. Discussions and presentations showed that Switzerland is at the forefront of addressing key issues of our time and makes important contributions in all these areas.

"Switzerland can now present itself as modern, innovative and surprising. The pier is a unique forum for exchange in diplomacy, science, art and innovation: it is a place for non-conformist creativity and an experiment of which Switzerland can be proud," said Consul General Hans-Ulrich Tanner. In the new common workplace mutual potential will be utilized more efficiently and create a lively interaction. Switzerland at Pier 17 emphasizes the diversity of Switzerland, and also consolidates its longstanding diplomatic presence in the western United States (since 1850). swissnex also hosts a rotating cast of Swiss businesses, universities, entrepreneurs, innovators, artists, and designers, adding to the vivid interaction. At Switzerland's new home on the Bay, partnerships among the institutions and between Switzerland and Western America will be strengthened.

As a special recognition of the relationship between Switzerland and the Bay Area, San Francisco's Mayor Edwin Lee presented a proclamation to Consul General Hans-Ulrich Tanner that September 23rd will now be "Switzerland at Pier 17 Day". The San Francisco City Hall was lit up red and white in honor of the colors of the Swiss flag.

And now, when you visit the Swiss Pier, you will be greeted by a familiar sign of home and a reminder of Swiss values: a Swiss railway clock stands at the entrance of Pier 17, showing you the



Consul General Hans-Ulrich Tanner (left) and San Francisco's Mayor Edwin Lee (right)



Photo by Bruce Damonte

way to the Consulate General, swissnex, the Swiss Business Hub USA and Switzerland Tourism.

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**California:** San Joaquin Valley Swiss Echoes Christmas Dinner

One hundred and thirty-seven guests enjoyed great food, friendship and fun at the annual Swiss Echoes Christmas Dinner held on Sunday, December 4th, at the beautifully decorated Ripon Swiss Hall. Uncle Buck's Blaze-N-Barbecue Catering provided delicious Prime Rib and Chicken Cordon Bleu dinners to the delight of everyone's tastebuds. The wonderful appetizers and homemade Swiss desserts were prepared by our own singers. The cookies were especially reminiscent of Swiss Christmases of the days of yore as we enjoyed the song: "Zimmetschtern han I gern, Mailänderli au; Tirggel und Spitzbuebe und Ring us Willisau; Lächerli lieben I, Chräbeli no mee; Totebäindli, Pfäffernüss mit Puderzuckerschnee". We were entertained by angels, reindeer, elves and a ventriloquist and had a wonderful sing-along of some traditional Christmas songs, led by our wonderful director, Agnes Litfin-Olmsted. Come join us in 2017 on the first Sunday of December!

BARBARA MASTERSON  
SWISS ECHOES SECRETARY  
EBARBEM@ATT.NET

**California:** United Swiss Singing Societies of the Pacific Coast 29th Festival, June 22-25, 2017

The San Joaquin Valley Swiss Echoes will be hosting the 29th United Swiss Singing Societies of the Pacific Coast (USSSPC) Singing & Yodeling Festival. The 4-day event will take place at the Double Tree Hotel in Modesto (Host Hotel), Modesto Convention Center, Gallo Center for the Arts - Mary Stuart Rogers Theater, and the San Joaquin Valley Swiss Club in Ripon. Approximately 220 - 240 singers from the nine participating singing societies (California, Oregon, Washington, Utah, and Canada) will be singing melodies from their native homeland dressed in colorful costumes of Swiss tradition.

Our special guest performers will be the Family Rohrer from Sachseln, Switzerland. The sisters Andrea und Petra have been performing as a duet since 1990. In addition to Switzerland, they have performed in Germany, Austria, Italy, France, Holland, and China. In recent years their children have joined them in their performances. This will be the family's first trip to California.

Please mark your calendars and join us for a great 4-day celebration!  
For more information please contact:

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## Wisconsin: Artist Nelly Weidman

Nell was born in Zurich in 1928. In 1951, she married Siegfried Weidmann and they emigrated to the United States in 1954 and settled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They raised two children and now have two grandchildren.

In 1977 Nell began making her original, completely hand-made "Mayad" dolls including designing and sculpting original clay heads. The



bodies are made from fabric, and all the clothing is handmade. "Mayad" is a combination of her children's names, Maya and Adrian. In 1985 The Milwaukee Swiss Singers hosted the Singing Festival, for

which she made 35 dolls, all wearing the traditional Swiss Costumes representing the Swiss Cantons.

Nell became active in the Milwaukee chapter of the Swiss Ladies Society, first as Finance Secretary, then as President. She was always interested in art and worked in many different mediums like painting, pottery, sculpture and crafts. While doing volunteer work at the Milwaukee Public Museum, she had the opportunity to paint one of the most prominent and delightful features in the European Village exhibit at the Milwaukee Public Museum: the Swiss clock tower. Her largest undertaking ever, Nell painstakingly hand painted the clock face in 1979.

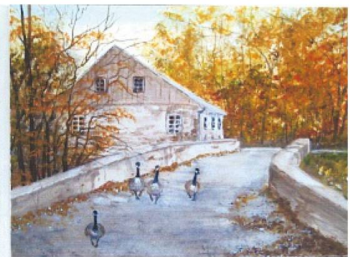


She accomplished this feat of drawing and painting while standing on a scaffold. The museum is located on Wells Street between Eighth and Ninth

Streets. On one side of the clock, the four languages of Switzerland - German, French, Italian and Romansh - are depicted, and on the other side, the legend of Wilhelm Tell unfolds.

Nell has continued painting, first modern, then wildlife and now mostly landscapes. She can be contacted at [nellweidmann@gmail.com](mailto:nellweidmann@gmail.com).

DORIS BERNATH CUNNINGHAM



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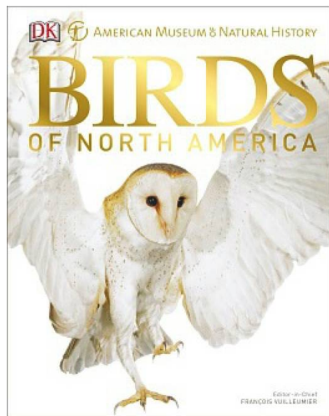
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**Book:** Birds of North America

François Vuilleumier,  
Editor-in-Chief



Updated to reflect all the latest taxonomic data, American Museum of Natural History Birds of North America is the complete photographic guide to birds found in the United States and Canada.

Ideal for the armchair bird enthusiast or dedicated bird watcher, this book includes stunning full-color photographs revealing 727 individual species with unrivaled clarity. The 659 most commonly seen birds are

pictured with plumage variations, and images of subspecies and information on similar birds are provided to make differentiation easy, from game birds and waterfowl to shorebirds and swifts to owls, flycatchers, finches, and more. You can even discover which species to expect when and where with up-to-date, color-coded maps highlighting breeding ranges and migratory patterns.

This updated and refreshed edition was written by a team of more than 30 birders and ornithologists with expertise in particular species or families. The classification of birds used in this book is largely based on the work of American Museum of Natural History (AMNH)

ornithologists.

The 744 page book is available from AMNH, Amazon, Barnes & Noble and other booksellers.

After Francois Vuilleumier received a Masters degree from the University of Geneva, he moved to the U.S. where he obtained a PhD from Harvard University. He pursued a long academic career at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, which houses the largest collection of birds and the best ornithological library in the Western Hemisphere. Past Chairman of the Ornithology Department, he is now Curator Emeritus. His research on birds has taken him all over the world and has resulted in about 250 scientific papers and one book. His extensive travels have uniquely prepared him to be this book's Editor-in-Chief. He lives in Piermont, NY.



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**North Carolina:** Swiss Society of Charlotte has a new President  
November 5th, 2016 marked another change of hand in the presidency of the Swiss Society of Charlotte.

Lots of farewell wishes for our "retiring" President Roger Boschung and treasurer Astrid Peterson, "the new election" of Markus Bersinger as President and treasurer Christian Hidden, great Swiss food cooked by a Swiss chef, happy people and cheerful discussions - these were all part of what made our Annual Dinner so special.

The chef at the Hilton spoiled us with a traditional Swiss "Bündner Gerstensuppe", a delicious "Zürcher Geschnetzeltes mit Spätzle", and a rich salad and dessert bar. A Swiss meal that reminded us of grandmother's kitchen.

We welcome our new President, Markus Bersinger and wish him and his crew good luck and success for the coming years with lots of exciting events. A special thank you to Roger and Astrid again for their hard work, dedication and support to the benefit of Swiss clubs. We will certainly miss you.

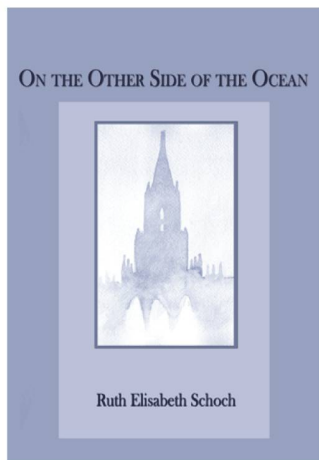


Roger Boschung (r)  
Markus Bersinger (l)

RAHEL KOLLER  
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## Book: On the Other Side of the Ocean

By Ruth Elisabeth Schoch (Knutson)



Ms. Ruth Schoch, the author's maiden name, is not a professional author - she is a retired nurse, grandmother, and storyteller who, like most grandmothers, relayed numerous stories of her growing up years in Switzerland to her own grandchildren as they grew up. They loved to hear how she lived in the small village of Dornach during the 1940s and '50s. Ms. Schoch's compilation of family stories, written primarily as a personal reflection and memoir

for her grandchildren, recounts incidents from the Old World, spawned by living under the same roof with loving and non-judgmental grandparents, a stoic mother, an alcoholic father and typical siblings, all complemented by colorful relatives and fellow villagers. The stories are personal, humorous, thoughtful and even historical, all written from the heart and without pretension. Although the book is written in English, the stories are occasionally dotted with

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words in Schwyzerdütsch (Swiss-German), making it even more nostalgic and endearing.

After her retirement, Ms. Schoch got up each morning excited to start writing. Because she does not type, she wrote the whole book out longhand, finishing the 320-page book enhanced with over 50 original illustrations by a freelance artist in less than a year. Now what would have been part of an oral tradition is in solid book form, a lasting record of an interesting life. Ms. Knutson lives in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

The book is self-published by Trafford Publishing and is available online or from any bookseller.

## Events

**Boston, MA:** Swiss Soiree March 25, 6:00 - 9:00 pm at the Hampshire House [www.swisscommunity.org/tinyurl/5864296258619/](http://www.swisscommunity.org/tinyurl/5864296258619/)

**Fredericksburg, TX:** Swiss Weekend at Barons Creek Side Swiss Log Cabin Resort, March 2-5, 2017

Silvie Ryder-Young, a fantastic jazz singer from Bern/Geneva will perform on March 3, 7:30 - 9:30 pm

[www.swisscommunity.org/tinyurl/586953551193e](http://www.swisscommunity.org/tinyurl/586953551193e)

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Number	Deadline USA
1/2017	December 14, 2016
2/2017	February 13, 2017
3/2017	April 17, 2017
4/2017	NO REGIONAL NEWS
5/2017	August 14, 2017
6/2017	NO REGIONAL NEWS

On Website
January 13, 2017
March 16, 2017
May 19, 2017

Mailed from CH
January 20, 2017
March 23, 2017
May 26, 2017

September 15, 2017
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September 19, 2017
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Arrival in US
approx. 1st week of February
approx. 1st week of April
approx. 1st week of June
approx. 1st week of October