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REGIONAL NEWS

UNITED STATES

Editorial

Dear readers/compatriots,

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas time and a good start of the new year. May it be a happy, healthy and prosperous 2024.

Have you ever wondered how you would handle living in Switzerland (again)? The subject seems to come up frequently on social media. The article below is a wonderful example how to enjoy and (re)discover your roots.

If you're getting closer to retirement and contribute(d) to the Swiss Old Age and Survivors' insurance (AHV/AVS), you might want to inform yourself about the changes (AHV 21) that went into effect on January 1st (www.ahv-iv.ch/en/). An overview will be published in the next Swiss Review main edition on March 22, 2024.

Please send me your contributions for the next Swiss Review USA edition by February 13, 2024.

I wish you a beautiful winter season.

DORIS BERNATH CUNNINGHAM, EDITOR

Being Back in Switzerland - Christmas Time

"When the smell of cloves, cinnamon, cardamon, and oranges fills the air at all the Christmas markets."

In the March edition of the Swiss Review USA, I wrote about our decision to move back from Miami to Switzerland after living abroad in various places for almost 30 years.

My first December in Switzerland was filled with many surprises. I never heard of 'Klausjagen' in Kuessnacht am Rigi which is a Santa Claus tradition. I could not believe the number of cowbells and lanterns. It started at 8:00 pm when all the lights in the village went out, the 'Geisslechlepfer' (whip noise) walked the street to make space for the "Iffeleträger" (lantern bearers) who carry handmade lanterns made out of carton and silk paper up to 6,5 feet tall on their heads. The parade continued with Santa Claus and several 'Schmutzli' followed by the brass players with the traditional 'Klausenmelodie'. Afterwards about 1000 'Trychler' (cow bell porters) fill the street with a sound of magic followed by the horn blowers. Cowbells can be heard all night and at 6:00 am they meet up again for the 'Sächsizügli'.

Another tradition I learned here in Weggis are 'Weihnachtsfenster' (Christmas windows). From December 1st through the 24th private homes and small businesses invite the people from the village to meet for the opening of their beautifully decorated window. The hosts provide drinks and snacks and it is a cozy get together to meet your neighbors. I love it and we have met lots of people.

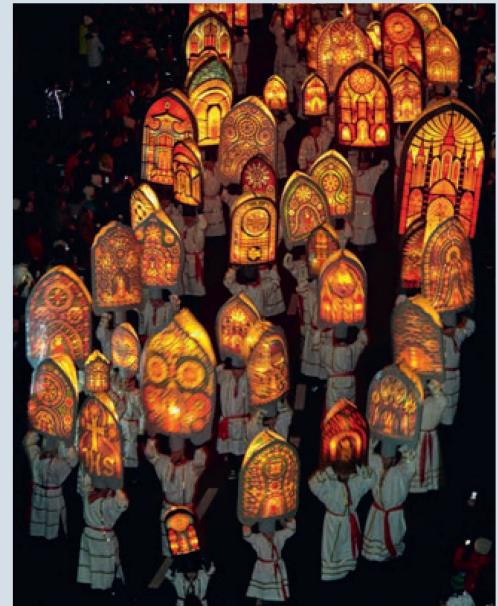
Now I like to tell you about the Christmas markets which I went to visit in Lucerne. I had to learn that there are several Christmas markets all over town and some events are only at certain dates/times. The one I liked most was the "Inseli" in Lucerne. The hut made of wooden logs had a very nice atmosphere and the tables and benches outside with open fire places made it so unique, sitting right next to the lake of Lucerne and chatting with people who also enjoyed their Gluehwein.

One December Sunday morning we woke up and it was foggy in Weggis, but up in the mountains the sky was clear and we enjoyed a breathtaking Winter Wonderland.

I had to change my mind about December being boring in Switzerland: it is not! I really love it including the 'Gluehwein', or maybe rather because of the Gluehwein...

Wishing you all a magical 2024!

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Illinois: Swiss Club of Chicago

Special Swiss Cultural Event in September: Kalberweidli Boys Band

The Kalberweidli Büablä Band from the Kalberweidli BioSuisse Farm in central Switzerland were in Chicago! The Swiss Benevolent Society, Swiss Club of Chicago, and the North American Swiss Center hosted a memorable afternoon that resonated with the folk tunes of the Kalberweidli Boys Band. The event was a resounding success, drawing in a sizable and enthusiastic crowd who were treated to an unforgettable celebration of Swiss culture.



Swiss Christmas Tree at the Museum of Science and Industry's Christmas Around the World Exhibition in November

The Swiss Club of Chicago brought a touch of Swiss holiday magic to the Museum of Science and Industry. The club's board members gathered at the museum to adorn a Christmas tree with Switzerland's festive traditions. The tree is decorated with handmade glass ornaments from the Glasi Hergiswil historic glass workshop in Switzerland. Set against the backdrop of the museum's Christmas Around the World and Holidays of Light exhibition, the Swiss Tree was one of over 50 trees and displays representing diverse global holiday traditions.

Raclette Night

The Swiss Club of Chicago's annual Raclette night marked the beginning of the colder season with good friends and even better cheese. Held at the cozy Edgebrook Luther Church, the event brought together cheese enthusiasts for an evening of warmth and deliciousness. The guest of honor was the newly appointed Swiss Consul General Pascal Bornoz and his wife Marie Elena, who joined us for their first Swiss Club of Chicago event. The raclette was melted to perfection on the club's handmade artistic raclette burners. Thanks to all who helped make this annual event a great success!

Noggeler Guggenmusig Carnival Band at Navy Pier

The Lucerne Committee of Chicago Sister Cities International (CSCI) brought a vibrant cultural experience to Navy Pier with the Noggeler Guggenmusig Carnival Band from Lucerne. Members of the Swiss Club in Chicago played a pivotal role in contributing to the event's success by actively participating and sharing their enthusiasm for Swiss traditions. Swiss Club members from Lucerne added a touch of authenticity to the celebration. The event highlighted the cultural exchange between the Sister Cities of Lucerne and Chicago.

Samichlaus & Guezli Bache in December

The Swiss Club of Chicago knows how to celebrate the holiday season with a touch of tradition and sweetness. This year's annual event was a delightful combination of baking and festive encounters. The day kicked off with Guezli Bache. The magical moment when the scent of freshly baked Guezli fills the air and the laughter of children echoes through the venue. Parents brought their children to meet the Swiss Samichlaus and his companion, the mischievous Schmutzli. The event was a heartwarming blend of Swiss traditions, sweet treats, and the joyous spirit of the holiday season.

We're looking forward to our Fondue Fundraiser & 67th Swiss Club of Chicago Annual Meeting on January 27.

Come join the fun! Make certain to check out our website at www.swissclubchicago.com to see our full calendar and event updates.

THERÈSE MARIE PESKOWITS, SPONSORSHIP DIRECTOR
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Pennsylvania: Philadelphia - Lipman Family Prize

In late April 2023, The Swiss NGO ADES located in Mettmenstetten, Switzerland was awarded the Lipman Family Prize by the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA. This award celebrates leadership and innovation in the social sector with an emphasis on impact and transferability of practices. This prize is granted to three recipients annually with a grand prize of USD 250,000 and the other two winners receiving USD 125,000 each. ADES was chosen as the second award-winning organization.

For ADES, this means the second international award within a short time. In November 2021, the organization received the title of Organization of the Year at the .ORG Impact Awards.

ADES has been working since 2001 to preserve Madagascar's forests and alleviate poverty through solar and energy-saving cookstoves, reforestation projects, and educational activities. As of 2022, ADES has sold over 400,000 solar and fuel-efficient cookstoves throughout Madagascar, benefiting an estimated 2.1 million people over the last 20 years. Of the 233 independent resellers, 80% are women who live in rural villages with few job opportunities. ADES has also educated over 100K teachers and students on the importance of Madagascar's environment, and planted over 500K trees, restoring 220 hectares of forest.

CHRISTINE PFISTER, HONORARY CONSUL
CONSULATE OF SWITZERLAND
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Florida: Swiss Club Miami

It has been an honor to serve as President of the Swiss Club Miami this past year and to keep the Swiss events and traditions alive in Miami! I am now back to pursue my career ambitions, which does not leave me enough time to devote to club activities any longer. A big thank you goes to the board members for all of the work on our events. There is really much work we all do to keep the club running. I look forward to seeing all the great happenings ahead for the Swiss Club Miami.

The good news is that the board members have appointed a new board member who will take on the Club President role in January 2024. Christophe Kuhn is a long time Miami resident and member of the Swiss Club Miami. He comes from Morges, Switzerland and has experience as a Board Member at the Swiss American Chamber of Commerce South Florida. We are excited to have him join us here at the Swiss Club Miami. Welcome Christophe!!!! He will be officially voted in by the members at the General Assembly in February 2024.

On to Events! The Swiss Club Miami started off the Fall season with a special Octoberfest Stammtisch held at Fritz and Franz in Coral Gables. Here, we enjoyed specialty food and beer to celebrate this yearly tradition. We continue to meet regularly for the Stammtisch, the first Wednesday of every month. Always check our website for details and locations.

On Halloween, we held our 10-year Anniversary of the Halloween Witches luncheon at Spris in Miami Beach. It was a wicked good time catching up on some fun witchcraft and spells. Tourists and locals stared in awe at the most amazing Witches in town. More photos are also up on our social media pages. Thank you to all for making the event so fun. Thanks to Olga Riedi and all the photographers who shared their photos with us! Congratulations to Gabi for winning best costume!



The Swiss Club Board Members wish everyone a Happy New Year!

NANCY FROHLICH, PRESIDENT
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Ohio: United Swiss Society of Cleveland

The United Swiss Society of Cleveland (USSOC) based in Cleveland, Ohio had a rather active last half of 2023. With multiple activities in addition to our regular monthly meetings. Our biggest event is always our annual August 1st Swiss National Day celebration held in a pavilion at a Cleveland Metroparks reservation. Again, this year we had close to 100 attendees of all ages. We are fortunate to have the Honorary Swiss Consul, Marianne Bernadotte attend yearly and to provide us with a video of an August 1st speech by the Swiss president as well as door prizes from Switzerland. As usual, we had a good number of Swiss nationals attend. This year for the first time we also had an alphorn player and some Amish from a nearby Amish community, all whom plan to become regular participants in the future.

Later in August we marched in the 77th annual Cleveland Cultural Gardens One World Day Parade of Flags, which celebrates the various cultures of the world. This event is attended by thousands of spectators every year. This year's event had over 50,000 spectators.

In September our group visited a cheese maker in the area where the Amish reside and also had a tour of the Geauga Amish Historical Library operated by the individuals who attended our August 1st event. The founder of the cheese maker was born and learned his trade in the Emmental Valley, Switzerland, the birthplace of Swiss cheese. Later in the month we had some members attend the Ohio Swiss Festival in Sugarcreek, Ohio.

In October one of our members resurrected what was once an annual affair, but had not been on our calendar for a few years: the Corn and Wiener roast. The weather was a little on the cool side but the food and a good time was had by all.

In November members of our organization attended the annual Bierfest held at the local German Cultural Center, where German traditional dances were performed and a tasty meal was served ... along with the beer, of course.

To round out the year, in December we hosted a Saint Nicholas party with a visit from Saint Nicholas himself.

For more information on our organization contact John Jencson at jjjencson@aol.com.

JOHN J. JENCSON
 PRESIDENT USSOC

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Minnesota: Twin Cities Swiss American Association (TCSAA)

On October 21st, we had our TCSAA Foliage Hike across the MN border at Willow River State Park in Wisconsin. The weather was a perfect autumn day. There was good foliage color, comfortable temperatures, and conversations everywhere. We started at the Nature Center parking lot and crossed the river after the dam. We had a diverse group of 15 with a range of ages and hiking abilities. At our midpoint in the day, we reached the iconic waterfalls and broke out our picnic lunch. The route back was along the riverfront and flat. In total we walked over 7 miles, I was told. The group spoke about our next get-together, a walk at the MN Landscape Arboretum in Chaska this Spring.

The Swiss community in the Twin Cities once again came together for a celebration of Swiss heritage and camaraderie at the Joint Fall Fest. Held on October 22 at the V.F.W. in the heart of Roseville, this event exceeded all expectations and left everyone in attendance with treasured memories to cherish. With 44 people in attendance, some of whom are members of both the Twin Cities Swiss American Association (TCSAA) and the Swiss Benevolent Society of St. Paul, this year's celebration was a testament to the enduring bonds that bind this close-knit community together to preserve and share their rich cultural heritage.

The Swiss spirit was everywhere, with attendees proudly displaying their Swiss heritage through a colorful array of hats, shirts, pins and more. The Swiss Joint Fall Fest Committee encouraged attendees to bring family photos and memorabilia to share with the community. It was a day filled with simple but delicious food, great



In November we had another very successful Cheese Sale. Many members ordered Swiss cheese through the TCSAA. In collaboration with Bühler, a Swiss Company in Plymouth (MN), we are able to sell many different varieties of genuine Swiss cheese for a very good price.

On February 10, 2024 the Fondue/Carnival Event will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota

For all upcoming activities follow us on Facebook or our website www.tcsaa.us.

MARKUS HOESLI, VICE PRESIDENT TCSAA
WWW.TCSAA.US

Northern California: Aelpler Gruppe Swiss Club

The Aelpler Gruppe Swiss Club hosted their annual Members' Christmas event on December 2, 2023. A wonderful lunch was prepared by Steven Ambiel with Sous-chefs Monika Ambiel and Suzanne Ambiel. Our event coordinator Arnold Ambiel delighted the



Aelpler Gruppe's events for 2024 :

- Feb. 25 - Jass & Fondue Dinner
- April 7 - Folklore
- August 3 - Swiss National Day Celebration
- August 31 - Schwingfest
- Oct. 27 - Fall Jass Tournament
- Nov. 9 - Metzgete Dinner and Dance
- Dec. 7 - Members' Christmas Lunch

Visit our YouTube channel to watch clips from our events and please subscribe: [Aelplergruppe](https://www.youtube.com/@aelplergruppe)

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Colorado: Swiss-American Friendship Society of Denver (SAFS)

Thank you Samichlaus who came and met with the children at Genesee Park. Everyone enjoyed this fun gathering despite the cold weather following a small snowstorm that came earlier in the day. Thank you to the parents for joining us at this unique event and thank you Amber with Redonkulous Ranch Sanctuary & Rescue for bringing Winkie to escort Samichlaus.

For more event information and Stammtisch get-togethers email or visit the safs.denver.co facebook page.

HEIDI TORNARE, SAFS PRESIDENT
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Florida: Swiss American Club of Sarasota

With the holidays just around the corner, on December 16th we celebrated our Annual Christmas party at the University Park Country Club. Back by popular demand, Emma the Harpist again graced our event with sounds of Christmas favorites. The members were each gifted Schweizer Guetzi favors as well as a complimentary raffle ticket with prizes which included Stollen, wine and various other surprises. It was a fun evening among friends.

During the month of December, Sarasota puts on a real show, downtown is all dressed up for the occasion with Christmas lights giving the revelers a feeling of joy and expectation. Christmas Carols, Choral performances and the Sarasota Orchestra that performs selections from The Nutcracker and other holiday favorites like "White Christmas" and "Greensleeves". It is an exciting time.

Soon the migration of the snowbirds will start, much to the mixed feelings of local residents. The businesses welcome the increase in business while the residents are not appreciative of the increase in car traffic. However, after you weigh the positives against the negatives ... positives come out on top.

On this note we would like to extend the warmest wishes to our Sister Clubs in the US - we hope your Christmas was Merry and that 2024 will bring Health and Happiness to all! We encourage anyone interested, Swiss nationals or friends of Switzerland, to come join us and contribute to our continued success. We are a fun and welcoming group, who firmly believes that a vibrant membership is the heart and soul of any organization.

So, Prost ... Cin-Cin ... Cheers ... Santé to a wonderful New Year to all!

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Arizona: Arizona Swiss Society

One glorious Saturday in December the elegant Swiss Club Christmas lunch, a buffet with all the trimmings and desserts European style, was held at a special venue at the Paradise Valley Country Club. THANK YOU, Max and Elsbeth, for making it possible to open the doors to this classy place for 120 Swiss members and guests to enjoy.

A warm welcome by Anthony, the president, and a speech by the Honorary Swiss Consul Werner Bonadurer started the festivities. We watched videos of Swiss Club members' children and grandchildren playing Christmas music ... on the piano Marc Hächler (from Switzerland), Shane Naughton piano, Zoe Naughton on the saxophone, and to end Sedona Ulrich, piano. How very special! More highlights: Toys for Tots, a yearly hit with a table full of Christmas gifts. Helene Block's Nutcracker Christmas story, surrounded by children. Toni Putrino on the piano during our meal, afterward changing to accordion for a Christmas sing-along. Then we heard the bell, Santa was here, at his best for EVERYONE to love, with hope that he will be back next year!



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Louisiana: Swiss American Society of New Orleans (SASNOLA)

On October 14, ASNOLA had a casual meetup at Oktoberfest, which is held annually during the month of October, at Deutsches Haus. We enjoyed visiting while feasting on traditional German fare and shopping the German market. Some folks participated in Masskrugstemmen (Beer Stein Lifting Contest) and Schnitzelbank, a humorous German song with audience participation led by the Professor. And of course, a crowd favorite, Chicken dancing, which went on throughout the day.

On November 5, in observance of "All Saints Day", a handful of members met up at the Swiss American Society of New Orleans Tomb at Greenwood Cemetery on Canal Blvd. to place flowers and pay our respects to our Swiss ancestors who are buried there.



On December 2, we weathered a torrential downpour and managed to get together for our Annual Holiday celebration with Brunch at Medium Rare Restaurant on Magazine St. in Uptown New Orleans. As always, there was a Swiss Jinglebell at every place for members to wear. This year we added a Swiss luggage tag place card at each setting as keepsake that

could be used for future travel. While drying off, we enjoyed bottomless Mimosas, Bloody Marys, fresh squeezed juices, coffee, tea, soft beverages and rustic bread. The menu offerings included Steak Frites, Steak Benedict, Egg Frites and Sausage, French Toast and Sausage and traditional Steak & Eggs. In spite of the weather that day, we all had a great time being together.

At our September board meeting, our president, Don Schwarzenbach mentioned that he drops into Deutsches Haus the second Wednesday or Thursday of every month, after 6:00 pm, and would welcome anyone to come and join him for an "informal beer" and a "non-business" catch up meeting. On October 11, we had a small group of four get together for a drink, conversation and some good German food. At the next "Meet up with Don" ASNOLA also had an impromptu gathering at Deutsches Haus on the evening of Dec 7th at 5:45 pm. The gathering started outside but for New Orleans, the weather was a little chilly, so the group convened in an inside room until 7:45 pm. Travel, food and holidays in Switzerland were discussed.

On December 17, the annual visit by Santa & Mrs. Claus for members with young children took place at The Stickney Home once again.

Our January Business Meeting/Party, is scheduled for a Sunday in late January where we elect a new slate of officers and make plans for the upcoming year.

JEAN STICKNEY, SECRETARY
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SWISSNOLA

Texas: Swiss-American Society of Houston (SASH)

The Swiss-American Society of Houston had a busy fall, culminating with two holiday events in December. We held our traditional Christmas cookies exchange on December 9th at the lovely home of Yvonne and Silvio Bücheler. The event was a feast for the eyes and the palate with a variety of exquisite baked Swiss goodies.



Our annual holiday party was on December 10th. We enjoyed a delicious 4-course gourmet meal and were entertained by renowned musician and singer David Caceres accompanied by our member Joshua Duffy. Everyone enjoyed getting together again with cheerfulness, holiday spirit and some dancing too!

In January we will resume our Jass games and on January 28th we will hold our annual membership meeting and board election followed by a Raclette dinner.

As we enter into 2024, we wish a Happy and Healthy New Year to all the Swiss Abroad.

To find out more about the activities of the Swiss-American Society of Houston (SASH), visit our website at www.swissamericanhouston.org or follow us on social media.

MAURA FERRERO-BARONI, SASH PRESIDENT
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Florida: Swiss American Club of Southwest Florida

25th Anniversary Gala

On December 8th over 90 members and their guests gathered at The Club at the Strand in Naples, Florida to celebrate a very special occasion. It's been 25 years ago that Peter Zahner and Rita Rüedi took the initiative to found the Swiss American Club of Southwest Florida in Naples. They started with 130 members and in all of the past 25 years the club has been going strong. Monthly activities keep the spirit alive and today the membership stands at 149.

It was a wonderful and fun celebration starting out with a one-hour Apéro for socializing with old and new friends. Everyone came dressed to impress and looked very festive. There was a photo wall set up from Swiss tourism to take pictures and selfies in front of a Swiss mountain scene.

Once all were seated in the beautifully decorated ballroom, the master of ceremony Vicki Burkhard welcomed everyone and introduced the current board members. She then handed the mic to Joe Huber, the club's president. Joe continued with introducing the Consul General Urs Brönnimann and his wife Katrin as the honorary guests. Also a welcome went out to the Honorary Consul from Miami Rene Riedi and his wife Olga as well as the representatives of the Swiss Club from Miami. Joe talked a bit about the history of the club and thanked the board for their ongoing support. He announced that Rita Rüedi as a founding member has been appointed honorary member by the board. Consul General Urs Brönnimann then addressed the attendees with updates about Switzerland.

Soon the gourmet buffet was opened and all enjoyed a very tasty dinner. During the dessert round the anticipated raffle draw was getting started. We had some very exciting prizes thanks to the wonderful sponsors supporting our club. One lucky winner took home several items. Some of the top prizes were two economy roundtrip tickets with Swiss from the US to Zürich; a one-week train ticket in 1st Class for two for unlimited travel in Switzerland from Swiss Tourism; and a 3-day-wellness vacation package from the



From left to right:

Vicki Burkhard, Hans Wenger, Urs Pfister, Lily Kraft, Katarina Brönnimann, Urs Brönnimann, Gemma Huber, Joe Huber

Golfpanorama Wellness Hotel in Lippenswil, Thurgau, which was presented by its director Alexander Spatz. All-in-all we had a total of 20 prizes to hand out. Check our website to see our amazing sponsors. All attendees went home with a nice gift bag of assorted chocolates by Läderach Chocolatier. The party and dancing started following the formal part, the dinner, and the raffle drawing. After all that good food we needed the exercise.

We look forward to many more fun gatherings and a strong continuation of our club.

Upcoming Events

- February 10 – Fondue Night
- March 23 – Easter Picnic in the Park
- April 13 – General Assembly

VICKI H. BURKHARD, SECRETARY
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New Jersey: Swiss Cultural Club at Cedar Crest Village in Pompton Plains

The Swiss Cultural Club at Cedar Crest Village in Pompton Plains, NJ meets monthly for lunch at our Tuscan Tavern. Out of 1,800 residents, ten of us have formed a closely knit group. This photo was taken November 9th.

Attendees from L to R:

Susan Keller, Ruth Scherrer, Erna Daniel, Peter Basler, Michele Gerke, Othmar Metzler (hidden), Gertrud Metzler, Max Oehler, Elizabeth Oehler, Sophie Murray



Washington: Seattle Swiss Society

The Seattle Swiss Society along with the Monroe WA Swiss Colony hosted a successful Raclette evening on November 18. This was the first raclette event held by the clubs in many years, but was completely sold out, with 94 members and friends taking part. It is certain to become an annual event.

On December 3rd Seattle and Monroe Swiss Clubs partnered to prepare for St Nicholas Day by making Grittibänz, enjoying a potluck, singing songs, and of course, receiving a visit from Samichlaus' cousin Santa. Around 30 Swiss children attended.

The club is planning to support the Everett Silvertips Ice Hockey team with discounted tickets for members at the game on February 10th.

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Other upcoming events are:

February 24 - Annual General Meeting at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Seattle at 2pm.

March 23 - Annual Fondue Dinner with Monroe Swiss in Monroe.

May 16 - Sponsoring a book event with co-author Yannick Wey of "Alpine Vibes: The Musical Connection between the Alphorn and Yodeling – Fact or Ideology" at Edmonds Waterfront Center. The English version was translated by Seattle Swiss member Gary Martin.

Swiss National Baseball Team is on the Move

The Swiss Senior National Baseball Team is looking for American/Swiss baseball players (ages 16-30) who can contribute to the energy of our team and help us compete on a global level.

We compete in the top European league and have been building momentum over the past few years. In 2022 we won our first European tournament in the 40-year history of Swiss baseball, thus earning a berth in the European Championships in 2023. There we beat highly regarded Belgium, (world baseball ranking 25) and Austria (world baseball ranking 26). The two wins were a tremendous accomplishment for Switzerland, who was ranked 52 going into the tournament. As a result of our stellar performance in the European Championships, our ranking has been upgraded to 36.

Now we have our sights set on the World Baseball Classic Qualifier in 2025.

For further information, please contact Manager/Head Coach Chris Byrnes.

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