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# REGIONAL NEWS

## CANADA

### Editorial

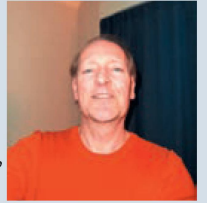
Dear Readers: The Swiss have just voted firmly in favour of a **13th monthly pension payment** as part of the country's old-age and survivors' state pension plan. Currently paid in 12 instalments, the initiative proposed a 13th pension payout per year as of 2026. The surprisingly strong backing by voters was called "historic" and seen by some as a

"protest vote". Specifically *how* the initiative will be funded has yet to be determined. Of note: The Swiss Abroad showed stronger support for the proposal than the general population in Switzerland (65% versus ~58%). In the run-up to the vote, critics had argued the Swiss Abroad were "milking the system" – they often reside in countries with a lower cost of living where the Swiss franc has more

purchasing power - and thus shouldn't benefit from an extra payment.

Given the rapidly rising cost of living in Canada, most Swiss here would probably disagree!

[avs@telus.net](mailto:avs@telus.net)



ANDREW VON STUERMER  
REGIONAL EDITOR

### Swiss Club Saskatoon

#### *HAPPY BIRTHDAYS !*

Our Club is celebrating a number of members with **BIG BIRTHDAYS** this year, and it's also a big year for birthdays ending in "0":

- **Bruno Koch** was 80 on January 6;
- **Rosemarie Eilinger** will turn 90 on April 22;
- **Walter Zunti** will be 100 years old on April 14 !

There are also three other members celebrating their 70th this year, along with quite a few celebrating 50 and 60 years.

Our raclette lunch was held on March 3 in the family room at Rosemarie Eilinger's seniors' residence.

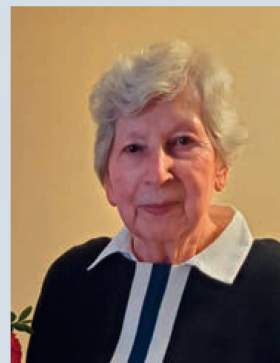
The June BBQ will be hosted by Ronny Zimmermann in Asquith, SK (close to Saskatoon), and Dora and Max Hug will again host the First of August Bundesfeier at their acreage north of Saskatoon. We will post the dates for these two events in our summer newsletter.

If you would like to receive information about our Club and its activities, contact us at [swissclubsaskatoon@hotmail.com](mailto:swissclubsaskatoon@hotmail.com), or call / text me at 1 - 306 - 260 - 8030.

New members are always welcome, and membership is free the first year. Even though our name is Swiss Club Saskatoon, we welcome Swiss from anywhere in Saskatchewan.



Bruno Koch at 80 in January 2024



Rosemarie Eilinger in 2023



Walter Zunti and his wife Elsie at Walter's 99th birthday party in 2023

ELISABETH EILINGER, PRESIDENT  
SWISS CLUB SASKATOON



## FÉDÉRATION DES SOCIÉTÉS SUISSES DE L'EST DU CANADA FEDERATION OF SWISS SOCIETIES IN EASTERN CANADA

**À tous les compatriotes suisses et les ami.e.s de la communauté suisse,**

La Fédération des sociétés suisses de l'est du Canada est fière de vous annoncer la tenue de notre traditionnelle **fête nationale suisse le samedi 3 août 2024 au Mont Sutton, à partir de 10h.**

Réservez cette date dans votre agenda pour que nous puissions célébrer ensemble notre fête nationale suisse!

Cette année encore, nous vendrons des billets de Tombola alors restez à l'affût du dévoilement des formidables prix que nous vous proposerons!

Fin janvier, nous avons eu notre assemblée générale, suivie d'une délicieuse fondue entre comité, président.e.s et représentant.e.s de clubs suisses. Votre comité organisateur pour l'année 2024 se compose de la vice-présidente Valérie Martinez, la trésorière Jeannette Perriard, la secrétaire Erika Schimann, et les administrateurs Silvia Bärtschi, Sebastian Hertner, Kenneth Hill, Urs Kaiser, Louis Savaria, Barbara Zaugg-Beugger. Nous avons l'honneur d'avoir au comité un membre ex officio en liaison avec le consulat, M. Rudolf Wyss, Consul, Chef Gestion, Culture et Communications.

Pour plus d'informations, veuillez visiter notre site Web : [www.fedesuisse.com](http://www.fedesuisse.com) ou notre page Facebook : [www.facebook.com/Fedesuisse](https://www.facebook.com/Fedesuisse).

À bientôt!

**Dear Swiss Community; Dear Friends:**

The Federation of Swiss Societies in Eastern Canada is proud to announce that our traditional **Swiss National Day celebrations will be held on Saturday, August 3, 2024 at Mont Sutton, starting at 10 a.m.**

Save the date in your planner so that we can celebrate our Swiss National Day together!

Once again, this year we'll be selling raffle tickets, so stay tuned for the unveiling of the great prizes we'll be offering!

At the end of January, we held our Annual General Meeting, followed by a delicious fondue with the committee, presidents, and Swiss club representatives. Your organising committee for 2024 consists of Vice President Valérie Martinez; Treasurer Jeannette Perriard; Secretary Erika Schimann; and Directors Silvia Bärtschi, Sebastian Hertner, Kenneth Hill, Urs Kaiser, Louis Savaria, and Barbara Zaugg-Beugger. We are honoured to have an ex officio member on the committee in liaison with the Consulate, Mr. Rudolf Wyss - Consul, Head of Management, Culture and Communications.

For further information, please visit our website [www.fedesuisse.com](http://www.fedesuisse.com) or our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/Fedesuisse](https://www.facebook.com/Fedesuisse).

See you soon!

VOTRE COMITÉ 2024



YOUR 2024 COMMITTEE



Photo credits: Valérie Martinez





Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Consulate General of Switzerland in Vancouver



## 2nd Swiss Innovation FEST Spotlights Cleantech Innovations

In April 2024, the Consulate General of Switzerland will host the **2nd Swiss Innovation FEST Vancouver**, with a focus on Cleantech, a pivotal theme for both Switzerland and Western Canada.

The event is organised by the Consulate General of Switzerland in partnership with Simon Fraser University and ISM Arts & Culture.

### Why Cleantech?

Switzerland's advanced technology sector boasts leading clusters in Cleantech, emphasising AI, robotics, personalised health, blockchain, advanced manufacturing, and sustainable business solutions.

Western Canada, too, excels in Cleantech, with strengths in renewable energy, water management, energy efficiency, hydrogen, carbon capture, smart grid solutions, and more.

Through the 2024 Swiss Innovation FEST, we aim to bring science and society closer together and demonstrate how innovation can impact the present and future of everyone in the community.



Join us from April 2 - 16, 2024

The 2-week programme kicks off with the *Can Tech Save the World?* exhibition at Simon Fraser University. Over the course of the festival, you can attend panel discussions, a start-up workshop and pitch showcase, networking gatherings, scientific exchanges, as well as a film screening co-hosted by the key partners of the Consulate General of Switzerland in Vancouver.

### Not in Vancouver?

Join us online! Many of the events are live-streamed or hybrid.

Visit [InnovationFEST.net](https://InnovationFEST.net) for the full programme, and be a part of the 2024 Swiss Innovation FEST!

Let's innovate together!



Two scenes from the 2022 Swiss Innovation FEST in Vancouver

## Swiss Heritage in Western Canada - Edelweiss Village in Golden, BC - LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

### Quick Historical Recap

In the April 2022 issue, we featured *Edelweiss Village*, a former Swiss colony in Golden, BC, the “home of the famous Swiss guides”. You can read that story here: [https://www.swisscommunity.org/fileadmin/revue/Ausgaben/2022/02/SRV-2202\\_CAN.pdf](https://www.swisscommunity.org/fileadmin/revue/Ausgaben/2022/02/SRV-2202_CAN.pdf) (see page III).

In an effort to boost tourism and mountaineering in the Canadian Rockies, starting in 1899, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) began hiring mountain guides exclusively from Switzerland, drawing on their expertise, rock solid reputation, and near flawless safety record.

In order to house these pioneering Swiss guides (who initially “commuted” seasonally between Canada and Switzerland), from 1910 to 1912, the CPR built an ensemble of six picturesque chalets that make up *Edelweiss Village*; this allowed the guides to relocate their families to Golden.

At the time of the 2022 article, the *Village’s* future was uncertain and potentially in jeopardy - the homes had long been sitting empty and were up for sale, possibly slated for demolition.

### Shared Announcements

Excerpts from a **joint statement** between Montayne Capital Corp. and the Swiss Edelweiss Village Foundation dated February 1, 2024:

*“We respect the historical significance of the Swiss Village and the Swiss mountain guides who lived there. We understand the importance of the Village to The Swiss Foundation, the local community, and to Swiss people living in Canada and abroad. Montayne’s collective passion and motivation is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of this unique place, including its legacy ...”* — Davin MacIntosh, Partner and Founding Principal, Montayne Real Estate Group.

*“We are looking forward to collaborating with Montayne in an advisory capacity and thank them for their trust and appreciation. We acknowledge the extensive work that Montayne has undertaken so far including the time-sensitive improvements of many of the at-risk elements of the buildings and site, and the restoration of the historic buildings which follow the original design to the best of their capacity. The Foundation appreciates Montayne’s genuine care for the site and its significant history ... we are thrilled to work together with them to create a place that strives to encompass education, culture, and community.”*  
— Dr. Ilona Spaar, President and Founding Director, Swiss Edelweiss Village Foundation.



The Edward Feuz Chalet: Before and after exterior renovations. Photo credit: Montayne

### New Owner and Work Performed

In July 2023, Canmore, AB-based **Montayne Capital Corp.** (“Montayne”) — <https://www.montayne.ca> — acquired the *Edelweiss Village* property.

To date, the new owner has made the following improvements to the site and its structures:

- **Site Assessment:** A comprehensive assessment of the site was performed to gain a deeper understanding of its unique characteristics and intricacies;
- **Ground Stability:** Extensive testing and surveys were conducted to confirm the stability of the ground and to ensure the safety of the buildings at their current locations;
- **Fire Smart Measures:** Strategies in line with the BC Fire Smart Manual were implemented to protect the homes and surrounding areas;
- **Renovation Work:** A complete exterior renovation of the buildings was carried out, including fresh paint and roof and deck replacements. The restoration process was approached with sensitivity and with a commitment to preserving and recreating as much of the original building design as possible;
- **Pest Control:** Measures to eliminate rodents and other unwanted visitors were taken, safeguarding the historic site;
- **Site Cleanup:** The site was cleaned up and debris was removed.

(Continued on page V)

## Swiss Heritage in Western Canada - Edelweiss Village in Golden, BC - LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

(Continued from page IV)

### Upcoming Commemorative Events

2024 is the 125th anniversary of the CPR first hiring Swiss mountain guides to work in Canada. To mark and celebrate the occasion, commemorative events are being planned for the weekend of **October 4 - 6** at Edelweiss Village, and in Golden. Details are not yet available. For updates, visit the **Swiss Edelweiss Village Foundation** website at <https://www.swissvillage.ca>.

### Future Prospects

In the near-term, Montayne intends to rent out the chalets in order to recoup some of its recent site-related and renovation costs. In regards to its long-term vision for Edelweiss, the company has stated that "... it remains a work in progress. We are exploring a variety of ideas to determine the best use of the land".

The Swiss Edelweiss Village Foundation is working with a heritage specialist to develop a so-called Statement of Significance that would pave the way to attain official **heritage recognition and protection** status for the site. This work is generously supported by a grant-in-aid fund from the Columbia Shuswap Regional District.

Last but not least, both parties are actively collaborating on the vision of creating a **Swiss Guides Great Hall** that would pay homage to the mountain guides that called Edelweiss their home, bringing their history to life and celebrating their contributions.



Close-up of the freshly painted Haesler House. Photo credit: Montayne

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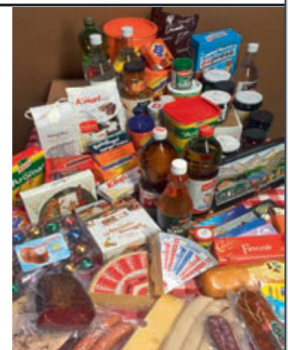
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## Edmonton Swiss Society and Edmonton Swiss Men's Choir Association

### Edmonton Swiss Society (ESS)

We had a very successful Samichlaus party for the children. Since there was no snow on the ground, we did crafts instead and discovered some very talented kids.

We will hold our AGM on April 5. If you would like to join us, check our Facebook page for more information.

The next few events will be a brunch on April 28, the Landsgemeinde on June 7, 8, and 9, and the First of August celebration on Saturday, August 3.

There will also be a bowling night either in March or in May. No date has been set yet, so please check our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/EdmontonSwiss>.

### Edmonton Swiss Men's Choir (ESMC)

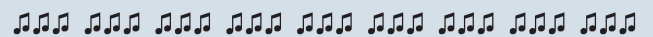
Our 2023 Christmas concert season ended with our popular annual concert at the St. Vital Catholic Church in Beaumont, AB (picture below).



For our first event in 2024, we were invited to present a short concert as part of the St. Valentine's Dinner & Variety Show at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Sherwood Park, AB.

Our second involvement was on Sunday, February 25, performing *Frost & Fire* at McDougall United Church, 10086 MacDonald Dr NW in Edmonton, hosted by Pro Coro Canada, with the Grande Prairie Boys' Choir. The ESMC was a participant and a sponsor.

At this time, we're in full swing getting ready for the North American Swiss Singing Alliance (NASSA) Sängerfest in Pittsburgh, PA. This festival will take place from June 20 to 23, 2024.



But before the upcoming NASSA event, we will join the ESS, the Wild-rose Yodel Club, and hopefully a few members of the Yodel Club Heimattreu at the annual Landsgemeinde weekend - June 7, 8, and 9 - to perform on Saturday evening at the Ol' MacDonald's Resort at Buffalo Lake (the photo below is from last year's event).



Once again, we'll celebrate the Swiss National Day at Maggie Naef's Art Barn in Parkland County. Check the ESS Facebook page for details.

On October 4, the ESMC plans to perform at the Swiss *Edelweiss Village* in Golden, BC, at the reception of the 125th anniversary of the Swiss mountain guides who came to Canada to work for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Then, on October 5, the ESMC would give a concert at the official celebration at the Golden Civic Centre.

For more information about future events, and on how to join the Choir, visit [www.esmca.ca](http://www.esmca.ca). Kindly "like" the ESS on Facebook under "Edmonton Swiss Society", and the ESMC under "Edmonton Swiss Men's Choir".

PETER THUT ON BEHALF OF THE ESS AND THE ESMC

## Swiss Canadian Mountain Range Association (Metro Vancouver)

As 2023 was drawing to a close, two Christmas events were held at the SCMRA Chalet. The first one, on December 3, was organised by the Swiss Society of Vancouver; the second one, on December 17, was for Club members. Both get-togethers were very well attended, and with lots of children.

The Club's annual Absenden event for the 300 m, 50 m, and crossbow ranges was held on January 27 and attended by approximately 40 people. The indoor 10 m shooting range had its Absenden on March 10.

The Swiss Canadian Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual fondue night at the Chalet. 54 members attended this very enjoyable evening.

The SCMRA is pleased to announce it has received an invitation to participate in this year's annual Rütli Schützenfest on November 5 and 6. Participation at the Rütli shoot is by invitation only.

While in Switzerland, our Club is also registered to participate in a shoot at Morgarten on November 14 and 15. Team members will be practicing hard this summer to ensure Vancouver is a strong competitor at both events!

**2024 International Match:** Despite the many years the Club has hosted the International Match, potential participants should nevertheless take the time to read through the information provided at <https://scmra.ca/international-match> on how to participate in this

popular competition. Swiss shooting clubs from anywhere are welcome to participate. The SCMRA welcomes everyone and would like to encourage strong participation in 2024!

We invite readers to visit our website at [www.scmra.ca](http://www.scmra.ca) for news, photos, and upcoming events at the Chalet.

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## Swiss Club Thames Valley

Hopefully everyone had a great Family Day! I was at a sugar bush serving pancakes and sausages with my service club.

On March 2, we had our Metzgete and Jassfinal.

On April 7, we will have the Toronto Theatre Group here again.

Please check our Facebook group "Thames Valley Swiss Club" and visit our website

<https://swissclubtv.wixsite.com/swiss-club-thames-va>.

CHRISTINE HEIMPEL

## Matterhorn Swiss Club (Montreal)

Greetings from the Matterhorn Swiss Club in Montreal!

Our last event was a lunch at l'Academie restaurant in Pointe-Claire. Once again, we were pleased to have a good turnout of members - it is always nice to get together with friends and colleagues.

Our next event will be the Annual General Meeting. Members will be advised once the date and location have been finalised. As usual, the AGM will be held at a restaurant where we can enjoy a good meal and socialise.

New members are always welcome!

WALTER SPIRIG, PRESIDENT

514 - 694 - 3718

## How an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Chatbot "Sees the World"

The recent controversy (regarding alleged biases) surrounding Google's **Gemini AI** sparked my interest in this new chatbot: I wanted to try it out. Competitor Bing describes Gemini as "a chatbot on steroids, with the ability to understand and generate text, code, and even interact with images and other types of data". While Gemini flat out refused to create images of people, it did generate pictures for other topics. A selection of results are shown below without further comment (note: the prompts I used are presented in the captions).

■ If you would like to experiment with Gemini, you can access the bot from <https://gemini.google.com>.



Draw what comes to mind when hearing "Typical scene from Canada / Switzerland"



Draw what comes to mind when hearing "Edelweiss Village in Canada / Switzerland"

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Draw what comes to mind when hearing "Typical Canadian / Swiss foods"



Draw what comes to mind when hearing "Canadian / Swiss inventions"

A.V. STUERMER

#### Regional News Canada

The Regional Pages are published four times per year (both in print and online) and consist of an eight-page insert in the Swiss Review magazine.

For information on content submission deadlines, publishing dates, and advertising opportunities, visit the following link:

<https://www.swisscommunity.org/en/news-media/swiss-revue/news-from-your-region/canada>