Even amid the gloom of COVID-19, the Swiss community continues to be innovative and productive. Look no further than this edition of the Regional News, which reports on many things NEW: podcasts, a consular newsletter, a book, a Consul General appointed, a Swiss artist’s first exhibition in Canada, an interview about a coveted internship, and more. Certainly, there are moments of regret and dismay when it comes to cancelled events and missed trips, but many take the view that certain joyful aspects of life are being temporarily suspended rather than completely eliminated, and they thus continue to look forward to postponed events with joyful anticipation. On another note, if you’ve ever used the Internet’s incredible Wayback Machine (archive.org/web) to unearth information you thought was long lost, you’ve just experienced the power of archiving in action. On page VIII, discover how the Swiss government makes similar benefits available to Swiss Clubs / Organizations in Canada, ensuring that their legacies live on.

Editorial

As part of the campaign to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Switzerland, the Swiss Embassy in Ottawa and the Consulates General in Montreal and Vancouver invited to a month of celebration “From the Swiss Alps to the Canadian Rockies” on their social media channels. Between July 1 and August 1 (the respective National Days of the two countries), the Swiss Representations in Canada provided interesting articles, videos, podcasts, and little giveaways.

The Swiss Representations in Canada also hosted a podcast entitled “From the Alps to the Rockies”. These broadcasts - set to continue for several more months - feature speakers from Switzerland and Canada, who address various aspects of the collaboration from the Swiss Alps to the Canadian Rockies. Episodes focus on immigration, innovation, diplomacy, and scientific collaboration. The podcast is available on Spotify and iTunes.

By going to Youtube.com and entering the search term “Swiss Representations in Canada”, you can access all of these videos and podcasts, among them a poetry slam and an animated National Day speech by the Swiss Ambassador to Canada.

NEW Event + Culture Newsletter

The Consulate General of Switzerland in Vancouver is pleased to introduce its very first Event + Culture Newsletter. We invite you to join in and explore Swiss and European culture in Western Canada.

- Access the first issue (August 2020) of the newsletter here: mailchi.mp/47f9dfa2b2e2/event-culture-newsletter-1
- To sign up for the newsletter, visit the link provided above and click on the “Subscribe” button at the top left-hand corner of the page.

NEW Book Release - Elke Porter

“75 German-Speaking Influential People in Western Canada” by Elke Porter shares the personal stories and accomplishments of Germans, Swiss, and Austrians, who immigrated to Western Canada in search of a better life. It also tells the stories of numerous associations, societies, charities, nonprofits, and festivals.

- BUY the book on MagCloud;
- Contact the author at admin@westcoastgermannews.com.
Chères Conciyoyennes
Chers Conciyoyens,

C’est avec grand plaisir que je m’adresse à vous pour me présenter en qualité de nouvelle Consule générale de Suisse à Montréal.

Je suis très heureuse de prendre mes fonctions cet automne et je me sens très honorée de pouvoir représenter mon pays dans cette belle région du Canada. Vous êtes plus de 26'500 compatriotes à avoir élu résidence dans l’arrondissement consulaire de Montréal pour sa qualité de vie, son histoire et ses traditions mais aussi pour son dynamisme et sa modernité résolument tournée vers l’avenir.

Durant mes 35 ans de carrière au sein du Département fédéral des affaires étrangères, j’ai eu le privilège de représenter la Suisse à Singapour, Bangkok, Luxembourg, Madrid, Strasbourg, Buenos Aires, Lima, New York et Saint Domingle où j’ai exercé les fonctions d’ambassadeur. Après ce périple dans diverses régions du monde, c’est avec grand plaisir que mon mari et moi prenons résidence à Montréal. L’accueil chaleureux de ses habitants et la beauté de la région sont prisés de toutes parts et promettent de belles découvertes au service de notre pays et de l’importante communauté suisse que vous formez.

Le Consulat général a pour vocation de sauvegarder les intérêts de la Suisse et de ses citoyennes et citoyens sur un vaste territoire qui s’étend aux Provinces de l’Ontario, Manitoba, Nouveau-Brunswick, Nouvelle-Ecosse, l’Île-du-Prince-Édouard, Québec, Terre-Neuve et Labrador, Territoire du Nunavut ainsi qu’aux Bahamas. Les Consulats de Nassau, Halifax, Québec, Toronto et Winnipeg, qui sont dirigés par des Consuls honoraires, complètent le réseau de représentations suisses de mon arrondissement consulaire.

Mon rôle à la tête du Consulat général sera de renforcer les liens d’amitié existants depuis l’arrivée des premiers émigrés suisses au 17e siècle et de créer de nouveaux ponts d’échange dans les domaines de l’économie, la culture et l’éducation. Dans les instances multilatérales, le Canada et la Suisse défendent les mêmes valeurs de démocratie, de respect des droits de la personne, d’égalité entre les sexes et de diversité. Les aspects de sécurité - en particulier de sécurité humaine - se trouvent au cœur de nombreuses initiatives et actions de politique étrangère de la Suisse et du Canada. Nos deux pays s’engagent également pour une société multilingue, la coopération internationale et la protection de l’environnement.

Je m’efforcerai aussi d’impulser auprès des leaders d’opinion, des médias et au sein de la population les échanges en matière de formation, de recherche et d’innovation qui s’inscrivent dans la déclaration commune signée en 2018 par la Suisse et le Canada et qui ont débouché sur une coopération scientifique déjà très intensive.

La Suisse et le Canada se caractérisent par leur économie de marché ouverte favorable au commerce et aux investissements. Depuis 2009, un accord de libre-échange conclu entre le Canada et l’AELE règle les intenses échanges commerciaux entre les deux pays. Le Canada est le deuxième partenaire économique de la Suisse en Amérique et la Suisse fait partie des dix plus importants investisseurs étrangers au Canada. La création d’un Swiss Business Hub Canada au sein du Consulat général à Montréal est une preuve du dynamisme de ces échanges bilatéraux et sert à promouvoir encore d’avantage la mise en relation des entreprises suisses et canadiennes.

Je me réjouis de surcroît que les échanges culturels soient facilités par le partage de la langue française et j’entrevois la réalisation de beaux projets avec les partenaires locaux dans un futur proche.

Mon époux et moi nous réjouissons de rencontrer la communauté suisse dont vous faites partie soit à Montréal soit lors de l’une de nos visites dans les provinces et régions où vous résidez.

Au plaisir de faire votre connaissance, nous vous adressons nos plus cordiales salutations.

LINE MARIE LEON/PERNET
CONSUL GÈNÉRALE DE SUISSE
Dear Fellow Citizens:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to introduce myself as the new Consul General of Switzerland in Montreal.

I am very happy to assume my functions this fall, and I feel honoured to represent my country in this beautiful part of Canada. Over 26,500 fellow citizens have taken up residence in the consular district of Montreal for its quality of life, its history and traditions, but also for its dynamism and resolutely forward-looking modernity.

Over the course of my 35 year career with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, I had the privilege of representing Switzerland in Singapore, Bangkok, Luxembourg, Madrid, Strasbourg, Buenos Aires, Lima, New York, and Santo Domingo, where I served as Ambassador. After this global journey, it is with great pleasure that my husband and I take up residence in Montreal. The warm welcome of its inhabitants and the beauty of the region are highly prized around the world and promise great discoveries in service to our country, and to the large Swiss community you form.

The Consulate General’s primary goal is to promote and safeguard the interests of Switzerland and its citizens over a vast territory covering the provinces of Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador; the Territory of Nunavut, and the Bahamas. The Consulates in Nassau, Halifax, Quebec, Toronto, and Winnipeg, headed by honorary consuls, complete the network of Swiss representations in my consular district.

As head of the Consulate General, my role is to strengthen the existing bonds of friendship to Canada that began in the 17th century with the arrival of the first Swiss emigrants, and to build new bridges to further develop the cultural, educational, and economic exchanges. Switzerland and Canada support the principles of multilateral cooperation and humanitarian assistance and collaborate closely on a range of priorities, such as promoting democracy, human rights and inclusion, and combatting climate change. Both countries are also committed to a multilingual society.

Moreover, I will endeavour to promote the exchange of information on training, research, and innovation among opinion leaders, the media, and the general public according to the joint declaration signed by Switzerland and Canada in 2018, which has already resulted in a very intensive scientific cooperation.

Switzerland and Canada stand out with their open, market-driven economy, conducive to trade and investment. Since 2009, a free trade agreement between Canada and the EFTA regulates the intensive trade between the two countries. Canada is Switzerland’s second largest economic partner in the Americas, and Switzerland is among the top ten foreign investors in Canada. The creation of a Swiss Business Hub Canada within the Consulate General in Montreal is proof of the dynamism of these bilateral exchanges and serves to further promote the business relationships between Swiss and Canadian companies.

Last but not least, I am delighted that cultural exchanges are being facilitated by a common official language, and I am confident that great projects with local partners are on the horizon.

My husband and I look forward to meeting the Swiss community, either in Montreal, or during one of our visits to your provinces and regions, and we send you our warmest greetings.

LINE MARIE LEON-PERNET
CONSUL GENERAL OF SWITZERLAND

Letté & Associés s.e.n.c.r.l.
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WWW.LETTE.CA

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Interior Swiss Club (British Columbia)

In our Spring 2020 newsletter, we announced the following events for this year: Our AGM to be held on April 18, our Annual Bowling Tournament to be held on April 5, and the Club’s 65th Anniversary celebration scheduled for October 24, 2020.

Sadly, I have to inform you that all these events have been cancelled due to COVID-19. The Board of Directors has decided that it is in the best interest of all not to hold any large gatherings in 2020.

The President of the Swiss Jodlerklub Holgant Schangnau (www.jodlerklub-schangnau.ch), in the canton of Berne, called to inform me they had to cancel their planned trip to Canada but are now planning, if at all possible, to perform at our 2021 Fall Concert. The members of the Jodlerklub are upset they cannot travel to Canada at this time; for many jodlers, this has been a lifelong wish. We will let all our members know if and when the group can travel to Canada in 2021, and we will then select an appropriate venue to finally celebrate our Club’s 65th anniversary!

The dates for the 2021 AGM, the Jass Tournament, and the Annual Bowling Tournament will be announced in January 2021. Many members have already paid their 2020 membership fee. Since we cannot have any events this year, we felt these members do not have to pay their membership fee for 2021 - they are therefore fully paid-up for 2021!

Please stay safe and well. Cordially,

LILLY SENN AND YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Due to COVID-19, we cancelled all events until further notice. This means we did not have our Raclette Lunch, our June BBQ, nor our 1st of August celebration. As of mid-August, the Executive has yet to decide how to safely conduct the AGM, which is typically held in late October at a local restaurant. At that time, we will also discuss the viability of the Santa Party, normally held on the first Friday in December. We will notify our members via a newsletter about our decisions in regards to these two events.

Swiss Club Saskatoon

Due to COVID-19, we cancelled all events until further notice. This means we did not have our Raclette Lunch, our June BBQ, nor our 1st of August celebration. As of mid-August, the Executive has yet to decide how to safely conduct the AGM, which is typically held in late October at a local restaurant. At that time, we will also discuss the viability of the Santa Party, normally held on the first Friday in December. We will notify our members via a newsletter about our decisions in regards to these two events.

Our Raclette Lunch, planned for early April, was of course cancelled as well. Since we had already received our shipment of raclette, we offered the cheese for sale at cost to our members. It sold quickly!

If you’re not already on our contact list and would like to receive information about upcoming events, please contact the Club at swiss-clubsaskatoon@hotmail.com, or call/text me at 1-306-260-8030. New members are always welcome, and membership is free for the first year. Even though our name is Swiss Club Saskatoon, we welcome Swiss from anywhere in Saskatchewan.

ELISABETH EILINGER, PRESIDENT, SWISS CLUB SASKATOON

P2P Whole Animal Butcher Shop
1420 Commercial Dr.,
Vancouver, 604.215.0050

P2P Keto Cafe & Butcher
1061 Denman St.,
Vancouver 604.689.0202

Shop online to order our organic meats, available for home delivery
pasturetoplate.ca

P2P - Pasture to Plate
Celebrating 20 years in Vancouver

Beef, Pork, Chicken
Lamb, Turkey, Charcuterie
grass-fed and grass-finished using biodynamic methods

KINIKINIK Restaurant,
Store & Accommodations
Featuring Swiss Chef
Ben Maurer on our
ranch in Redstone, BC
Open year-round
250.394.6000

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Matterhorn Swiss Club (Montreal)

Greetings from the Matterhorn Swiss Club in Montreal!

Back at the beginning of March, we held our AGM. At that time, we joked about not shaking hands and greeting each other with elbow taps. Little did we know that would be our only activity for 2020! Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were unable to hold our usual events. We’re hopeful that by 2021, the situation will be somewhat back to normal, and that we will be able to resume our regular activities, starting with an AGM in February or March.

Until then, we hope everyone stays safe and healthy. New members are always welcome!

WALTER SPIRIG, PRESIDENT, 514-694-3718

Edmonton Swiss Men’s Choir Association

Dear Singer Friends:

We sincerely hope that you, your family, and fellow singers are all healthy during these unprecedented times!

NASSA 2021 Festival Committee members have had multiple meetings recently to decide whether or not (and how) to hold the NASSA Festival in 2022, or to postpone or even cancel this event. These were difficult deliberations; especially over the course of the last month, we came to the realisation that choir practices - and even more so, concerts - are not likely to occur in the foreseeable future.

Not being able to sing in a group has brought traditional practices to a halt. Online singing, singing with barriers, singing in opposite directions, singing outside, etc. do not seem to be really successful and are certainly not favoured by singers, who also like to experience the social aspects and camaraderie of being part of a choir.

As a result of COVID-19, we face many uncertainties, such as:

- Government implemented restrictions in regards to group assemblies, as well as travel and immigration restrictions (quarantines);
- Financial hardships for attending choirs, due to lack of fundraising opportunities;
- Health concerns for many attending choir members, due to the ongoing pandemic and the uncertainty of having access to a vaccine for everyone in due time; and
- A lack of sponsorship opportunities amid a sputtering economy.

Considering the financial risk we would be taking by continuing to commit to the NASSA 2021 Festival in Edmonton, we regret to tell you that we’ve decided to cancel the upcoming Sängerfest in June 2021.

We are currently looking at alternatives and will be working through several scenarios during the summer. In November, we will bring a recommendation to the Edmonton Swiss Men’s Choir (ESMC) at the AGM. Should ESMC members decide to work toward a new date in 2022, we would let you know by end of May 2021 whether we would proceed, based on the situation at that time. For the time being, please pencil in June 30 - July 3, 2022 for a possible NASSA Sängerfest in Edmonton.

We are terribly sorry for this outcome, but trust you understand, considering the circumstances.

With Sängergruss - The NASSA 2021 Festival Committee

ESMC Updates

August 11, 2020: The ESMC Executive just completed another online meeting via Zoom. Unfortunately, the current situation has not improved - since the middle of March, we have been without our weekly rehearsals.

November 14, 2020: The ESMC was going to celebrate its 40th anniversary at the annual Winzerfest. Due to COVID-19, this event will not take place. We look forward to celebrating this important milestone at a future date!

The ESMC wishes everybody all the best and good health!

PETER THUT
Swiss Canadian Chamber of Commerce (Western Canada)

Administrator Success Stories

Ever wonder who supports the Board of Directors of the Swiss Canadian Chamber of Commerce (SCCC) in their daily activities and helps them put on Chamber events?

Over the past decade, six young and ambitious Swiss were given the opportunity to move from Switzerland to Vancouver for an exciting internship as an SCCC administrator!

10 years ago, SCCC President Vince Sciamanna introduced the idea of adding a young and dynamic intern to the SCCC team, someone who would run Chamber activities and events and maintain SCCC’s online presence.

Ever since, the SCCC has been offering an attractive internship roughly every 18 months. So far, six young Swiss have been employed, and the success of this internship speaks for itself: with every new intern, the Chamber has gained new perspectives, developed new approaches, and implemented new ideas.

Although the internships are tied to work permits that range from 12 - 18 months in duration, four former SCCC admins continue to live in Vancouver after completing their internships; they have stayed close to the SCCC network and have applied for permanent resident status, one even for Canadian citizenship.

October 2019: Five SCCC Admins with the Man who made it all possible: Vince Sciamanna, SCCC President 2011 - 2020. The Admins (from left to right): Melanie Ferreira, Marco Urfer, Nina Bader, Thomas Andrey, and Jacqueline Banz

In the following, read some excerpts from an interview where Melanie Ferreira - the Chamber’s current admin - asked four of her predecessors about their lives in Vancouver, and about their roles at the SCCC. (To read the interview in its entirety, go to www.swisscanadianchamber.com/2020/05/22/the-success-story-of-the-sccc-administrator ).

What do you enjoy most about Vancouver / British Columbia? What is the biggest difference to Switzerland?

"I’m an outdoor person. I love to escape from daily life into the wilderness to camp, hike, ski, surf and all that just around the city. This makes for a perfect work life balance. BC is wilder than Switzerland, not only in nature but also culturally, which makes life more exciting and spontaneous."  
– Marco Urfer

"Having the mountains and the ocean so close is my favourite thing about Vancouver, and it’s the greatest playground ever. No matter what kind of outdoor activity you like, you’ll find it here. I love the laid-back West Coast culture here, and I think both countries can learn from each other."  
– Thomas Andrey

"I love the city’s perfect location between the mountains and the sea. It is wonderful to have nature all around us and still have the advantages of a big city. I also appreciate the openness and relaxed lifestyle of Canadians, which I think is also one of the biggest differences to Switzerland."
– Nina Bader

"The great outdoors, combined with a multi-cultural and fairly relaxed city life. I don’t want to compare Canada to a Switzerland that I left almost 10 years ago. A lot of things change in a decade. So I’m not sure what the biggest difference would be today."  
– Jacqueline Banz

Besides family and friends, what do you miss most about Switzerland?

"Besides friends, and before COVID-19? Discovering new places in Switzerland and Europe, on a budget and with little time. Everything seems to be ‘close by’, so that lots can be done on a (long) weekend, and travel is affordable. Plus, I enjoy historic, old towns with their little streets, charming neighbourhoods, and places to gather."
– Jacqueline Banz

"Honestly, besides people, I don’t miss much. I mean, I get my Swiss fondue and chocolate here. What I miss most is to be in a place and among people I feel very familiar. As exciting as life here is, it is always a great feeling to stroll through my town, hear people speak the beautiful Bernese dialect, and visit places where I have spent a lot of time."
– Marco Urfer

"Rivella, Ovi chocolate, Wurst-Käse salad, Zweifel chips ... Like everyone, I miss the food. And sometimes, I miss Zurich, I have always liked this city and my studies there very much. Of course, I also miss my rural Thurgau and its peace and quietness."
– Nina Bader

"Can I just mention family and friends? That’s really the thing I miss the most, and there’s nothing else that gets close to that. Also, the Swiss Alps are unique, and sometimes looking at pictures just doesn’t do the job and I wish I was there."
– Thomas Andrey

SWISS CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (WESTERN CANADA)

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Born in Basel in 1949, Cahn takes a wide-ranging, eclectic approach to her artistic practice, which over time has included performances, films, sculptures, chalk drawings, writings, watercolours, and oil paintings.

Emerging from the peace and feminist movement of the 1970s (in which she participated actively), political themes and the fight for social justice are often reflected in her work. The human figures she has repeatedly depicted in her paintings since the 1990s, for example, are often irradiated with a nuclear-like light or distorted and disfigured. They reflect an unsettling and hostile world, albeit one that is often rendered in sumptuous and alluring colours.

The exhibition at The Power Plant – her first in Canada - will present an expansive overview of her work, including drawings, paintings, film, photographs, and text. Entitled ‘ME AS HAPPENING’, it will gesture to the ‘happenings’ of the 1960s, as well as to more recent events, such as the migration flows of forcibly displaced people.

Cahn’s work has been shown in exhibitions around the world and is held in the collections of major museums, such as The Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Tate Modern in London. She lives in Stampa in Graubünden, where the artist Alberto Giacometti was born.
Swiss Clubs in Canada: Archive Your Documents with the Swiss Federal Archives!

Did you know that as a Swiss Club / Association in Canada, you can file (archive) certain kinds of eligible documents with the Swiss Federal Archives (SFA) in Berne? The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) would like to remind you about this opportunity and invites you to contact them at direction@aso.ch, with an idea of the Club files you would like to submit for archiving. Frau Sandra Jehle is available at that email address to take your questions; the deadline is September 30, 2020.

What specific categories of documents / records are eligible for archiving (the SFA uses the term “archive worthiness”)? To give you some guidance on this, review the information posted below (in French and German); it was excerpted from a longer letter the OSA sent out earlier this year. If neither French nor German is your thing, I would be happy to help bridge the language barrier – just email me at avs@telus.net.


Procédure pour l’archivage des documents des associations suisses aux Archives fédérales suisses (AFS) à Berne

L’Organisation des Suisses de l’étranger (OSE) est en contact avec les Archives fédérales suisses (AFS) à Berne pour réorganiser l’archivage des documents des associations suisses aux Archives fédérales.

Quels documents peuvent être archivés aux AFS?
En règle générale, les documents du comité et de l’assemblée peuvent être versés aux AFS: statuts, procès-verbaux des réunions, procès-verbaux des assemblées générales, y compris élections et comptes / rapports annuels, correspondance. Programmes annuels (pas de programmes détaillés par événement, sauf, le cas échéant, pour les anniversaires spéciaux, etc.), listes de membres, documents concernant les concepts et projets sous l’égide des associations, etc.

Quels documents n’ont pas leur place aux AFS?
Ne sont pas versés aux AFS les publications telles que les magazines, les livres, les articles, les documents de presse ainsi que les collections de photos et de films dont les informations contextuelles sont manquantes (où il est difficile de savoir quel est l’objet / le sujet représenté), quand, où et par qui les clichés ont été réalisés ainsi que les photos ou les films qui ont exclusivement une signification privée / personnelle (pour les sujets représentés), les objets tels que les actes, les médailles, les cartes de vœux, etc. S’y ajoutent également les exemplaires multiples / copies d’originaux existants et les documents qui ne sont pas pertinents pour les affaires (documents provenant de tiers). Veuillez également vous référer à ce sujet au formulaire «Aide-Mémoire liste négatives». Vous y trouverez des informations importantes sur les documents qui ne peuvent pas être archivés aux AFS.


Nous demandons aux associations suisses de bien vouloir nous communiquer d’ici le 30 septembre 2020 les documents conservés dans leurs archives. Veuillez envoyer vos réponses par e-mail à: direction@aso.ch.

Pour toute question, veuillez contacter Mme Sandra Jehle.