

REGIONAL NEWS

UNITED STATES

Editorial



Watching your home country compete on the world stage from abroad sharpens one's sense of identity in unexpected ways. This February, while in Switzerland for Luzerner Fasnacht, I found myself immersed in precisely that experience—albeit from the opposite perspective.

During the Winter Olympics, I joined friends in living rooms and crowded watch gatherings where Swiss flags, quiet anticipation, and then sudden, collective exhilaration filled the space. Switzerland's strength in alpine skiing and curling was unmistakable; these were not just events, but moments of national pride. I learned quickly that what might seem like niche disciplines to an outsider carry deep cultural significance and historical continuity.

As an American, I was struck by how difficult it was to follow U.S. performances. Broadcast priorities, commentary, and public attention naturally favored Swiss athletes and their successes. It required effort—searching out alternative coverage, tracking results independently, and watching figure skating via YouTube a day later—to stay connected to my own country's successes and standings. That subtle displacement underscored how mediated our experience of international competition truly is.

At the same time, it offered a valuable recalibration. Observing how the Swiss engage with “their” sports provided insight into the rhythms of national enthusiasm: the technical knowledge shared casually among viewers, the emotional investment in athletes whose careers are followed closely over time, and the pride in disciplines that define a country's global sporting identity.

This summer, as the FIFA World Cup unfolds across the Americas, that perspective will shift again. Switzerland's supporters in the United States will gather in bars, homes, public screenings, and host stadiums, seeking out familiar voices and shared allegiances. They will celebrate goals and endure defeats slightly removed—both geographically and culturally.

Having now experienced the inverse, I better understand the dual consciousness of cheering from abroad: the pride in one's national team coupled with the awareness of being a guest within another country's sporting narrative. It is an experience defined as much by adaptation as by allegiance.

International competitions like the Winter Olympics and the World Cup do more than showcase athletic excellence. They reveal how identity travels—and how, even from afar, it can feel immediate and unexpectedly present. Hopp Schwiiz! Go USA!

THERESE MARIE PESKOWITS, EDITOR

What Recent Decisions in Bern Mean for Swiss in the United States

The latest session of the Council of the Swiss Abroad in Bern focused on issues with direct relevance for Swiss citizens living in the United States—particularly mobility, voting access, financial connectivity, and long-term security.

A central topic was Switzerland's relationship with the European Union. While geographically distant, this remains highly relevant for Swiss in the U.S. Europe continues to shape Switzerland's legal and economic framework, including access to labor markets, pension coordination, and return pathways. In this context, the Council took a clear position against the “10-million Switzerland” initiative, citing risks to free movement and legal certainty for Swiss citizens living abroad—especially those planning to relocate, retire, or maintain cross-border family ties.

Democratic participation was another key focus. E-Voting continues to progress, but access remains limited. For Swiss in the U.S., where postal delivery can be slow or inconsistent, this directly impacts the ability to participate reliably in federal and cantonal votes and elections. Expanding secure digital voting remains essential to ensuring equal participation.

Financial and institutional support also featured prominently. Parliament has signaled that most planned cuts affecting Swiss abroad will not be implemented. This helps preserve core services such as SwissCommunity.org, Swiss media, and Swiss schools abroad—important for maintaining access to information, education, and community across generations.

Finally, briefings from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs highlighted the importance of consular support and preparedness in a more volatile global environment. For Swiss in the United States, the takeaway is clear: decisions in Bern continue to shape everyday realities abroad—from voting access to mobility, financial planning, and long-term security.

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California: Peninsula Swiss Club

Our 65th Year

The Peninsula Swiss Club in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area has hit the ground running in 2026! We kicked off our milestone 65th anniversary year with a well attended Fondue Event on February 7th. Over one hundred and twenty members and friends gathered at the Masonic Hall in Mountain View to share cheese, laughter, and live music from the Zicke Zacke Band. Following that success, our families joined the Easter Bunny for a joyful Easter celebration on April 5th; keeping our cherished Swiss traditions alive for the next generation of Swiss-Americans.

The heart of this year, however, is our official 65th Anniversary Gala, which will take place on September 19th. This grand celebration will be held at the History Club of Los Gatos, where

we will honor our club's rich history since 1961. With a focus on community and heritage, we invite all members—past and present—to join us for this landmark event. After the gala, we will continue our anniversary year with the Herbstfescht and the beloved Samichlaus visit in December.

Please visit our website for more information and to purchase tickets to our 65th Anniversary Gala.

Ucoming Events

- May 31st: BBQ / Semi-Annual Meeting
- September 19th: 65th Anniversary Gala

DOMINIC SIEGRIST
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California: Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce Southern California

Groundbreaking Ceremony



Left to right: Veronica Besmer, Vice Chair SACC So-Cal, Fiona H. Marshall, President Biomedical Research, Jonas Brunschwig, Tech Ambassador and Swiss General Consul, Thierry Diagana, Head of Global Health and California Sites Head at Novartis Biomedical Research and Victor Bultó, President Novartis US.

Representing the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce Southern California, Vice Chair Veronica Besmer joined Consul General Jonas Brunschwig at the groundbreaking ceremony for Novartis' new Biomedical Research Center in San Diego on February 6th.

The event brought together Swiss and local leaders to mark another milestone in the long-standing relationship between

Switzerland and Southern California. It was a proud moment for the Swiss community in the region and a celebration of the enduring ties that connect Switzerland and the United States in science, innovation, and friendship.

VERONICA BESMER
VICE CHAIR AT THE SWISS-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
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Florida: Swiss Club Miami

Busy Start to 2026

As every year we had our Bike Tour in the Shark Valley Florida Everglades on January 25th and we enjoyed the cooler weather while observing alligators relaxing in the sun. Our annual General Assembly was held shortly thereafter on February 4th at the Mutiny Hotel in Coconut Grove. The 2025 financials and the new board were approved by the members. On February 21st we had a very special Dragon Boat Experience. It was a lot of fun on the water and a great teamwork event for our Swiss community.

We are getting ready for our traditional Swiss Picnic Event for March 29th in Tropical Park in Miami. We already ordered a lot of Swiss bratwursts and cervelats. Each family will bring their preferred salad or dessert to share with the community. For the kids we will have a bouncy castle and other fun outdoor activities. Our next event, Fondue Night, will be held at the Cuckoo Clock Restaurant on April 8th where everyone will enjoy communal dining and conversation.



Bike Tour in the Shark Valley Florida Everglades, pictured: Renee Amundson, Uwe Fischer, Carlos Galvez, Kimberly Galvez, Nicole Kasten, Christophe Kuhn, Antonio Marquez, Adriana Martinez, Bea Schmied, Thomas Schmied, Marc Shapori, Daniel Stankiewicz

In memoriam

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Astrid Artho, who left us peacefully on March 8th, 2026, after a long and courageous battle with illness. For more than ten years, Astrid dedicated herself to supporting the secretary of the Swiss Club of Miami and actively contributed to many of the club's activities. Over the past two years, she had been an honorary member of Swiss Club Miami, in recognition of her dedication and lasting commitment to our community.

Ucoming Events

- May 13: After Ski Party with the Ski Club Miami
- TBD: Flamenco or Cuban Night: Dancing Show

A great thank you to our annual and event sponsors. We love our sponsors! Stay tuned on for all upcoming events on our website.

CHRISTINA SCHOELZEL, PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS
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Dragon Boat Experience, pictured: Uwe Fischer, Andreas Hoor, Christophe Kuhn, Yuliana Leon Lopez, Remo Maute, Domenic Millen, Sandra Morales, Heidi Naranjo, Louis Naranjo, Rosa Odalis Sainz, Dayla Spain Sainz, and Victoria Valdez.

Florida: Swiss American Club of SW Florida

Fondue Extravaganza: Melting Not Just Cheese, But Hearts

As if guests couldn't make it fast enough to this year's Fondue Extravaganza, many showed up a full thirty minutes early. While the board members were still setting up, guests were already mingling—clearly afraid that the cheese might melt without them.

Shortly after 4pm, President Vicki officially kicked things off by welcoming everyone and introducing the board members. She then handed the stage to Urs Brunner, who entertained and educated us with a short documentary on cheese making in Gruyère proving once again that cheese really is serious business.

It then was finally time for what everyone was truly waiting for. Master cheesemaker Urs Pfister explained today's fondue process, ensuring every table heated their fondue properly and avoided any "cheese emergencies". The fondue mix—Urs' own top secret recipe—was, as always, outstanding. The verdict was unanimous: Best Fondue Ever. Guests ate until their bellies were happily full, and for the first time in recent history, we even had some homemade baked goods left over, a rare and impressive achievement that can only be blamed on the irresistible fondue.

A huge thank you to Markus Albrecht for securing the clubhouse space, to Urs Pfister for working his cheesy magic, to Urs Brunner for his assistance, and to all the board members who helped make this event happen. Fondue Night is one of our most labor-intensive events, and without this fantastic teamwork, this would not have been possible.

Judging by the laughter, empty pots, and extremely satisfied guests, everyone agreed, the 2026 Fondue Extravaganza was another delicious, cheese-filled success!



Urs Brunner and Urs Pfister



Stirring it up: Hanspeter Christ, Rosmarie Wenger, and Andrea Stoecker for the Swiss American Club of SW Florida

Illinois: Swiss Benevolent Society, Chicago

Festival de la Francophonie

On February 27th, Team Swiss Chicago served authentic Swiss raclette on potatoes with cornichons at the Kick-Off Party for the month-long Festival de la Francophonie organized by the Alliance Française at their marvelous cultural center in the heart of the River North neighborhood. Over two hundred guests stopped by for a tasting and short conversations about their own personal connections to the French language and Switzerland. The evening long celebration included food, libations and cultural representation from eleven countries on four continents.

Inspired by Alta L. Price's translation Alberto Giacometti - *Time Passes Too Soon: Family Letters* - the Swiss Benevolent Society of Chicago teamed up with the Alliance Française and the Consulate General of Switzerland Chicago and rolled out an event series that celebrated the life and work of Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti. The Consul General of Switzerland, Pascal Borno, hosted a Skyline Chat with translator Alta L. Price at the Residence of the Swiss Confederation. The Alliance Française hosted a screening of Susanna Fanzun's 2023 documentary *I Giacometti* followed up by a book talk and signing with Alta L. Price in conversation with Donato Loia (UChicago) and the final workshop, *Your Alberto - Sip & Sculpt* will be an art atelier focused on exploring the work of Giacometti and using his oeuvre as an inspirational foundation for creating individual works of art... à la Giacometti.

Our quarterly series of Senior Meetups got off to a great start with sixteen participants, ranging in age from 4 to 94, on March 10th. The topic was Spring in our Hearts and Memories, with a multi-media introduction of migratory birds in Switzerland and their songs along with a participatory game of "Name

Upcoming Events

- May 9: R.A.D. Winery Wine Tasting
- June 18: Pizza & Bowling
- July 2: Hurricane Cocktails, Bites & Storm Stories

VICKI H. BURKHARD, PRESIDENT
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that Spring Flower” based on common and uncommon spring flowers in Switzerland. We continued our tradition of hot soup and sandwiches, and a selection of fruits and sweets brought by the participants.

The Chicagoland Swiss Community has the great advantage of being able to work cooperatively with the Swiss Club of Chicago, the Swiss American Business Council, the Lucerne Committee of Sister Cities International and the Swiss Consulate of Chicago. As emblazoned on the ceiling of the Federal Palace, *Unus pro omnibus, omnes pro uno* (One for all. All for one), the Chicago Swiss Community strives to support this important value of unity and community, and we are lucky to be able to join forces for regular and special events.

JOHN PALUCH, PRESIDENT
WWW.SBSCHICAGO.ORG



Festival de la Francophonie Raclette Night: Row 1: Rhonda Lustenberger, CJ Park, Marie-Simone Pavlovich
Row 2: Cécile Landry, Sonja Manhart, Johan Lustenberger, Beatrice Weiss, Joe Lustenberger, John Paluch

Illinois: Swiss Club of Chicago

Ski Weekend in New Glarus and Tyrol Basin, WI

Over a weekend filled with excitement and camaraderie in New Glarus, Wisconsin, a unique blend of winter sports and Swiss-inspired delights were enjoyed. Despite the warmth in the air and snow conditions not quite mirroring the picturesque landscapes of Switzerland, laughter echoed across the slopes as attendees embraced the challenges of the day and specialty schnapps drinks in the ski chalet.

As the day transitioned into evening, the festivities continued with a gathering at the Chalet Landhaus Restaurant. While the snow outside may have been sparse, inside, the warmth of the Swiss-inspired ambiance enveloped guests as they indulged in a culinary journey through Swiss specialties. From savory fondue to decadent desserts, every dish served as a testament to the rich flavors and traditions of Switzerland. Weekend attendees departed with memories etched in their hearts and smiles upon their faces, it was evident that the warmth of Swiss camaraderie had eclipsed any shortcomings of the snow.



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

On the Wisconsin slopes: Liam Crolla, Ruedi Bucher, Elke Sujdak, Laurent Crolla, and Patrick Seitz

Illinois: Swiss Club of Chicago

Fasnacht Luzern



The Wicked Witches of Chicago include Martin Lager, Reto Woodtli, Horst Zemp, Tammi Zemp, Margaret Kennedy, and Therese Marie Peskowits.

Many Swiss Club members hail from Lucerne and make an annual pilgrimage back home to celebrate the festive tradition of Fasnacht. Alongside Swiss Club President Horst Zemp, the group dressed in festive matching themed costumes, dancing and reveling from day to night—making plenty of noise to scare away Winter. It seems their efforts were unsuccessful though, as both Lucerne and Chicago have since had a cold March with fresh snowfall. They have tried to stay warm with holdrios - hoping to break Winter's spell - and secure the arrival of Springtime birds and flowers.

Upcoming Events

- May 23: Birds & Biers in Milwaukee, WI
- June 21: Swiss Sunday Brunch on the Lakefront, Chicago, IL

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Louisiana: Swiss American Society of New Orleans

President's Letter

In the 19th century, as Swiss immigrants established new lives in the United States. In New Orleans, these early settlers formed a community grounded in mutual support and cultural preservation, leading to the founding of the Swiss American Society in 1855. In times of hardship—such as the yellow fever epidemic of 1878—the Society played a vital role, including the construction of its tomb at Greenwood Cemetery, which remains a lasting symbol of solidarity and remembrance.

Today, the Swiss American Society of New Orleans proudly stands as the oldest continuously operating Swiss organization of its kind in the United States. Our mission is to preserve and promote Swiss culture, traditions, and fellowship in the Gulf South.

Throughout the year, our members come together to celebrate and sustain this heritage: in January for our annual meeting and board elections; on August 1st in celebration of Swiss National Day; in November for a commemorative gathering at Greenwood Cemetery on All Saints' Day; and in December for our holiday celebration.

We warmly welcome new members and friends of Switzerland to join us. As we look ahead, we remain committed to honoring our past while strengthening our community for future generations.



A commemorative gathering at Greenwood Cemetery on a past All Saints' Day.

MICHEL DEPREUX, PRESIDENT
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Collecting Switzerland



I was born in Switzerland, and one of my earliest memories is sitting at the kitchen table with my dad, sorting through piles of stamps. Back then, it was a simple way to spend time with him, but it ended up opening a window to a much bigger world. Through those little bits of paper, I discovered geography, art, and history long before I learned them in school.

Eventually life brought me across the

Atlantic to the United States. But even after years of living here, my "philatelic heart" is still very much in Switzerland. There's a certain nostalgia that comes with collecting from abroad. It isn't just about printing methods or paper types -- it's about home. Holding a Swiss stamp here in the US feels like holding a small piece of Helvetia. It keeps the connection alive even from thousands of miles away.

These days I focus exclusively on Swiss stamps and I'm active in the American Helvetia Philatelic Society (AHPS). It's a group of people who love Switzerland and Swiss philately in all its forms. The AHPS is a great community.

If you're curious about any of this, you should come see us at Boston 2026 World Stamp Expo, running from May 23–30, 2026. It's a massive event and the AHPS will have a booth in the Europe Hall to welcome you.

I'd encourage you to drop by even if you don't consider yourself a "collector." Maybe you've got an old album you inherited from a Swiss grandparent and never knew what to do with, or maybe you just want to see some beautiful Swiss design. Come find us at our booth. We're happy to help you figure out what stamps you've got or just chat about home.

Stamp collecting has taught me a lot about patience and looking closely at the details. But more than that it's given me a sense of belonging. Switzerland might not be where I live anymore, but it's always there in my albums -- and in the friendships I've made through this hobby.

I hope to see a few fellow Swiss faces in Boston this May.

BETTINA GRAY, AHPS MEMBER
WWW.SWISS-STAMPS.ORG



About the American Helvetia Philatelic Society (AHPS)

Switzerland has a story like no other. Its history, its culture, its Alpine landscapes, all of it is captured, in miniature, on its postage stamps. The American Helvetia Philatelic Society (AHPS) brings that story to life for Swiss enthusiasts around the world.

Since 1938, our welcoming international community of more than 220 collectors and researchers spanning 11 countries — from the United States to Switzerland and beyond — has brought together enthusiasts of all levels and backgrounds. No prior knowledge needed... just a love of Switzerland and a curiosity about its story, told one stamp at a time.

For some, it starts with a cherished album discovered among a parent's or grandparent's belongings — a small treasure that suddenly feels like a direct line to home. For others it's simply a lifelong fascination with the country itself. Either way, the AHPS is your community. Through our journal TELL, monthly member meetings on Zoom, and a wealth of research resources, we make it easy to explore Switzerland's story at your own pace.

Swiss stamps are more than collectibles, they are a portrait of Switzerland itself, its landscapes, its history, its people, and its traditions. They can be a wonderfully tangible way to keep Switzerland close, wherever life has taken you.

Discover what the AHPS has to offer with a free digital issue of TELL, our award-winning journal, and a personal invitation to join one of our friendly monthly member meetings held via Zoom. No commitment, just a warm welcome. When you're ready to join, annual membership is just \$20 in the U.S. and \$40 overseas, and your first year starts free.

To request your free copy of TELL, e-mail Secretary@Swiss-Stamps.org. For more information, visit www.Swiss-Stamps.org or join the conversation in our Facebook group, AHPS: the Swiss Stamp Collecting Society.

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Minnesota: Twin Cities Swiss American Association

Cheese Fondue Event

Weeks before our Valentine’s Day Cheese Fondue event, the excitement was already building. Due to ongoing construction at the Germanic American Institute, seating was initially limited to sixty-six guests. Thanks to a creative solution—using the basement as well—we were able to welcome ninety-six fondue lovers! That meant more planning, more caquelons (sixteen of them!), plenty of cheese, and, of course, the charming Lindt hearts decorating every table.

Ticket sales went flawlessly, and one week before the event, we were officially sold out—a wonderful sign of enthusiasm for this beloved tradition.

On Valentine’s Day, our fantastic kitchen crew worked tirelessly, cutting bread, preparing the cheese-and-wine mixture, and setting the stage for a truly delicious evening. This year’s fondue blend was outstanding and quickly became the star of the night.

At 6pm, guests gathered for a cheerful social hour. It was a joy to reconnect with members we hadn’t seen in a while. Soon, everyone was seated, and as the rich aroma of fondue filled the room, the celebration truly began. Bite after bite, smiles spread—and by the end, not a single drop of fondue remained!

The dessert buffet, featuring a delightful mix of cakes, tortes, and tarts, also fell victim to the same fate. Every treat disappeared, proving once again that quality beats quantity—no leftovers—only happy guests.



New York: Swiss Benevolent Society of New York

Meet the SBS of New York

As we are all excitedly waiting for some warmer days and sunshine, 2026 started out quite exciting for the SBS of New York. We hosted our 8th annual Swiss Heritage Night. A large group of members, their families, and friends joined on January 29th to cheer on the New Jersey Devils ice hockey team against the Nashville Predators. Swiss captain Nico Hischier scored the winning goal for the 3-2 win in overtime! We were then joined by the Swiss players - Captain Hischier, with fellow forward Timo Meier, and defenseman Jonas Siegenthaler a group photo. And with that winning mindset, we look forward to continuing engaging our Swiss community with more regular and special events planned throughout the year..



MARKUS BRUDERER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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Upcoming Events

- June 14: Annual General Meeting

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