

REGIONAL NEWS

UNITED STATES



Pro Patria Pin 2026 Photo Therese Marie Peskowits

Editorial

What a Tiny Pin Teaches Us About Swiss National Day



To an outsider, August 1st—Swiss National Day—looks like a beautiful festival of farm brunches, community bonfires, and flags waving against Alpine backdrops. But if you look closely at the lapels of the locals gathering to celebrate the historic 1291 alliance of the Swiss Confederation, you will spot a distinct tiny emblem pinned to their shirts.

The Pro Patria pin is an official August 1st badge sold exclusively on this holiday as a profound symbol of solidarity, charity, and national pride. For over a century, buying this pin has served as a voluntary "holiday tax" where citizens directly fund the preservation of their country's soul.

Every August 1st, Switzerland celebrates its National Day. Beyond the bonfires and flags, the holiday's true spirit shines on the lapels of locals wearing the official Pro Patria pin. Sold exclusively on this special national holiday, these badges represent a profound pledge of solidarity, charity, and national pride. Historically crafted by people with

disabilities, every purchase acts as a voluntary contribution to safeguard the nation's cultural landscape. The 2026 theme bridges the physical and living past by celebrating both tangible and intangible Swiss cultural heritage. Proceeds fund the physical restoration of historic buildings, alpine paths, and bridges, saving them for future generations. The theme champions intangible cultural heritage like folk customs and regional music, fostering vibrant community encounters today.

Even the clever 2026 design mirrors Swiss ingenuity. Featuring a detachable Velcro strap—honoring the 1941 invention by Swiss engineer Georges de Mestral—the badge can be repurposed as a keyring or bag accessory—a perfect emblem for a culture designed to be carried forward seamlessly into the future. To an American observer, this tiny red pin teaches a beautiful lesson: a nation's character is maintained through active, daily care.

If you are interested in learning more about Pro Patria or exploring the specific architectural monuments funded by these holiday pins, please visit their website at: www.propatria.ch

THERESE MARIE PESKOWITS, EDITOR

AUGUST FIRST SPECIAL EDITION

This edition of the Swiss Review is dedicated to Switzerland's National Holiday, celebrated each year on August 1st. Across the United States, Swiss clubs, societies, and community organizations gathered to honor their heritage and traditions. The pages that follow provide a snapshot of how Swiss living abroad marked this special occasion from coast to coast. Readers will discover festive gatherings, cultural activities, traditional foods, and the unmistakable Swiss spirit that unites communities far from home. To capture these celebrations, participating organizations were invited to submit a photograph and four brief sentences describing their event. The result is a collection of stories that highlights both the diversity and the shared traditions of the Swiss community in America. Together, these contributions showcase the many ways Swiss customs and flavors continue to thrive across the United States. This summary presents the submissions received from Swiss clubs and organizations that participated in this nationwide project.

California: Sacramento Helvetia Verein



The Sacramento Helvetia Verein had a wonderful time celebrating Swiss National Day together. It was a fantastic opportunity to reconnect with friends and toast to our shared traditions. Members of the SHV gathered to enjoy club-provided schnitzel alongside traditional Swiss delicacies contributed by our community. We are delighted to share this snapshot of our celebration with the broader Swiss community.

GABI WACKERLI, TREASURER
WWW.SACRAMENTOSWISS.COM

Arizona: Arizona Swiss Society



Gilbert, AZ's brand-new Bottles and Board opened its doors for our yearly August 1st celebration. Platters of assorted cheese from around the world and meats, fruits, etc., decorated with Swiss flags, prepared by Roland Ulrich, our ex-President, what a perfect meal on a hot August day that included a yummy tomato Salad, apfelstrudel with vanilla sauce and Swiss cookies. A wonderful Swiss wine was a fantastic addition, ordered specially for 63 attendees to have an extra fabulous time.

TRUDY WELLS-MEYER
WWW.ARIZONASWISSOCIETY.COM

California: Santa Barbara Swiss Club



Santa Barbara Swiss Club had our First of August celebration on Saturday August 1st at Goleta Beach Park in Goleta, California. A tri-tip barbecue was served with beans, garlic bread and various salads. Forty members and guests attended to listen to accordion music and the Swiss First of August speech from the Swiss president. Afterwards, we had dessert and a live auction featuring various Swiss goodies as a fundraiser for the club.

KAREN PATA, SECRETARY
WWW.SOCALSWISS.COM/SANTA-BARBARA-SWISS-CLUB

Florida: Swiss American Club of Sarasota



The Swiss American Club of Sarasota marked Swiss National Day on August 1st with a festive gathering of members and friends, honoring Switzerland's rich traditions and strong sense of community. A particularly memorable moment was the presentation of flowers by Club President Nelly Camardo to the club's longest-standing member in recognition of an extraordinary 41 years of loyal membership and dedicated support. The gathering reflected the club's longstanding commitment to preserving Swiss heritage, building lasting friendships, and fostering a welcoming community for all.

LIZA BUEHLER, COMMUNICATIONS
WWW.SWISSAMERICANCLUBSARASOTA.ORG

Florida: Swiss Club of Miami



The Swiss Club of Miami celebrated the Swiss National Day on August 1st at Bay 13 in Coral Gables. This commemoration of Switzerland's founding and the values of unity, independence, and civic pride gave the Swiss Club of Miami an occasion to bring the local Swiss community together to share traditions and strengthen connections. Members, families, and friends enjoyed an evening full of traditional flavors, familiar sounds, and, of course, the Lösli sale for the Tombola. Sharing stories, toasts, and moments of togetherness is part of what being Swiss and part of this great community is all about.

UWE FISCHER, VICE PRESIDENT
WWW.SWISSCLUBMIAMI.ORG

Florida: Swiss American Club of Southwest Florida



The Swiss American Club of Southwest Florida celebrated Swiss National Day on 1 August 2026 with an authentic Swiss barbecue at The Landings Yacht Club Picnic Pointe in Fort Myers. Members enjoyed reconnecting with friends, listening to the Swiss President's speech to the Swiss Abroad, followed by the Swiss national anthem. A delicious lunch of St. Galler Olma Bratwurst with Bärli and Thomy mustard was followed by a wonderful homemade dessert buffet that everyone thoroughly enjoyed. The successful celebration was a wonderful tribute to Swiss traditions, friendship, and community.

VICKI H. BURKHARD, PRESIDENT
SWISSAMERICANCLUB.COM

Illinois: Consulate General of Switzerland, Chicago



Consul General Beat Schmid and his team celebrated August 1st with local officials and Consulates, Swiss association members, local partners, and friends of Switzerland at the Residence of the Swiss Confederation. It was a pleasure reconnecting with familiar faces and meeting new ones over traditional raclette and delicious Swiss Läderach chocolates.

OFFICE OF BEAT SCHMID, CONSUL GENERAL
WWW.EDA.ADMIN.CH/CHICAGO

Illinois: Swiss Club of Chicago



The Swiss Club of Chicago brought the Swiss community together welcoming more than 140 people from across the Midwest to celebrate Switzerland's 735th birthday. Guests enjoyed Swiss favorites including brats, cervelat, salads, homemade Augustweggli, Swiss wines, and Läderach chocolates, while two alphorn players performed and the group joined together to sing the Swiss National Anthem. Despite the summer rain, the celebration was filled with Swiss spirit and the warm camaraderie of fellow Swiss who came together to honor their homeland on this special day.

THERESE MARIE PESKOWITS, DIRECTOR OF SPONSORSHIP
WWW.SWISSCLUBCHICAGO.COM

Michigan: Detroit Swiss Society



Over 90 Detroit Swiss Society members and guests, including quite a few first timers, joined our annual Swiss National celebration at Island Lake State Park in Brighton, Michigan. We enjoyed a beautiful summer day with good friends, Swiss traditions, and great food supplied by the club and the members.

THOMAS LOZSER, PRESIDENT
WWW.DETROITSWISS.COM

Indiana: Swiss Club of Central Indiana



The Swiss Club of Central Indiana's August 1st celebration is a wonderful annual gathering of about 40–45 members and friends coming together to enjoy good food, fellowship, and a little Swiss tradition. It's a pot-luck-style meal, with members bringing their favorite side dishes and desserts, while the club grills cervelats, brats, and sausages. We gather at a church in Greenwood, just south of Indianapolis, where the outdoor pavilion provides a great setting, with air-conditioned indoor seating available too. It's always a favorite club event and a great opportunity to celebrate our Swiss heritage together.

BRIAN WITZIG, PRESIDENT
WWW.SWISSCLUBINDIANA.COM

Minnesota: Twin Cities Swiss American Association



The TCSAA was fortunate once again to celebrate August First at the Trechsel residence, a cherished gathering place for decades and the perfect setting for our traditional bonfire. Thanks to the dedication of our experienced Organizations Committee and beautiful weather, highlights included the tombola, featuring generous prizes from Swiss companies, as well as Swiss sausages, traditional side dishes, and a fantastic dessert buffet. The Swiss President's speech and National Anthem - completed a capella when technology failed - followed by the tombola drawing and bonfire, brought a memorable day of traditions to a close.

MARKUS HOESLI, VICE PRESIDENT & SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR
WWW.TCSAA.US

New York: Swiss Society of New York



Swiss spirit took over the Hudson River waterfront as more than a thousand guests gathered in New York City to celebrate Swiss National Day on August 1, 2026. Swiss food favorites, live music, family activities, the Swiss Village, raffle prizes and a colorful lampion parade brought generations of Swiss, Swiss-Americans and friends of Switzerland together. Organized by the Swiss Society of New York in collaboration with the Consulate General of Switzerland in New York, the annual celebration continues to be one of the largest gatherings of the Swiss community in the United States.

LINDA BRAIDO, CONSULAR OFFICER, CONSULAR SECTION
WWW.EDA.ADMIN.CH/NEWYORK

Oklahoma: Swiss Club of Oklahoma



The Swiss Club of Oklahoma gathered for a Swiss National Day lunch celebration in Tulsa with over 40 people in attendance. Together, the group sang the national anthem in Schweizerdeutsch and listened to President Guy Parmelin's address to the Swiss Abroad. Honorary Swiss Consul Rico Buchli also led a lively trivia contest for the crowd. To wrap up the afternoon, members enjoyed visiting with one another and purchasing Swiss-style cheeses from the Grisons dairy.

ED ZWEIACHER, DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION & PHOTOGRAPHY
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/P/SWISS-CLUB-OF-OKLAHOMA-61577038536664

New York: Swiss Benevolent Society of New York



On August 6th, 30 members and friends of the Swiss Benevolent Society of New York celebrated the Swiss National Day with an excellent dinner at the Swiss restaurant Lavaux in Manhattan. A great time was had by all enjoying the food, drink and good company.

MARKUS BRUDERER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
WWW.SBSNY.ORG

Oregon: Portland Swiss Inc.



A crowd of 350 Swiss and friends of Swiss gathered in Helvetia, Oregon to celebrate August 1st Swiss National Day and the Portland Swiss Club's 108th Annual Schwingfest. Under a light overcast sky in the rolling farmland settled by Swiss immigrants in the late 19th century, 13 Senior and 16 Buebe wrestlers from across the west coast competed for the gold crown while spectators enjoyed Swiss cervelat and bratwurst sausage, alphorn burgers, and steak dinners with wine, beer, and Helvetia Cider slushies. The celebration concluded with a dance and crowning ceremony under the stars to the Landler and polka music of the Kapella Blaser-Faver.

DON ODERMOTT, PRESIDENT
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PORTLANDSWISS

Pennsylvania: New Helvetic Society, Philadelphia Chapter



The Council of the New Helvetic Society invited its members and guests to a fabulous Swiss National Day Celebration at the beautiful Arasapha Farm in Glen Mills, PA on the actual 1. August Day! We celebrated with beautiful music, a fabulous fleischkäse/ham dinner and a great lampion parade which put a huge smile on the kids' faces. The bonfire at the end of the event was fabulous as you can see in the picture. We take great pride in celebrating the traditions of our little country here in the United States.

DANIELA KOVALCIK, PRESIDENT
MYSWISSCLUB.ORG

Vermont: Swiss Club of Vermont



The Swiss Club of Vermont meets twice per year - for an afternoon get-together in Central Vermont in May, and of course for our August 1st celebration in Southern Vermont. We enjoy raclette, cervelat, and bratwurst and many other typical Swiss specialties contributed by our membership. We find ways to keep Swiss culture alive through conversations, exchange of Swiss cultural items, and Swiss trivia games with interesting facts about our home country.

MAGGIE MCGLYNN, PRESIDENT
WWW.SWISSCLUBVT.COM

Wisconsin: New Glarus Volksfest



The New Glarus Volksfest, hosted by the New Glarus Männerchor, was held at the historic Wilhelm Tell Shooting Park and welcomed approximately 500 visitors for a day of Swiss music, fellowship, and tradition. Performances featured the Jodlerklub New Glarus, Monroe Swiss Singers, New Glarus Kinderchor, Alphornbläser, Biergarten Specials brass band, Taler- and Fahnnenschwingen, and New Glarus Männerchor, along with visiting performers from Switzerland, including this year's guests, House of Voice from Widnau. Guests enjoyed a picnic lunch of local Hoesly bratwurst and Landjäger accompanied by live accordion music.

JACQUELINE JUDD
WWW.SWISSTOWN.COM/MAENNERCHOR-JODLERKLUB

District of Columbia: Swiss Club of Washington, D.C.



The Swiss Club of Washington, D.C. celebrated Swiss National Day on August 1st. The celebration occurred on the grounds of the Embassy of Switzerland and had over 600 people in attendance. In addition to a lampion parade, Swiss cuisine, Swiss vendors, and a high-end raffle of generously donated Swiss prizes, the event also featured performances by alphorns, the Swiss Folklore group, The Washington Tattoo, The 22 Grey Coats Fife and Drum Corps, and other artists. We were also honored to be joined by several representatives of the Swiss Embassy, including Mr. Adrian Hauri (Deputy Chief of Mission).

KEVIN SPRENGER, PRESIDENT
WWW.SWISSCLUBDC.ORG

Shaping the Future of the Fifth Switzerland: Highlights from the Council Meeting in Brunnen

Delegates from around the world gathered in Brunnen to discuss digital services, citizenship issues, governance reforms, and the evolving role of the more than 836,000 Swiss citizens living abroad.

The first day included two parallel activities. A group of delegates requested further information on financial reporting and auditing. They received a detailed briefing from the chief financial officer and the external auditor.



Delegates gather in Brunnen Photo Andy Ramseier

The remaining delegates took part in workshops on improving digital services for the Swiss community and strengthening the financial independence of these offerings. A key conclusion was that the current range of digital services is broad but fragmented. The Swiss-Community app could play a stronger coordinating role by bringing these services together more effectively. The goal would not be to replace local and regional social-media initiatives, but to connect them intelligently—potentially with AI-supported personalization.

The evening included meetings hosted by the international sections of the FDP, Die Mitte, GLP, and SP. The United States does not yet have an SVP section, although discussions are underway to establish one by March next year. Members interested in learning more are welcome to contact me.

The second day was devoted to the statutory meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad.

Important updates were also provided by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA/EDA). One key message concerned young Swiss citizens living abroad: their birth and citizenship must be registered with a Swiss authority. A person born abroad who also holds another nationality may lose Swiss citizenship at age 25 if their birth has not been registered with a Swiss authority in Switzerland or abroad. Passport renewal was another recurring concern. With the Schengen Entry/Exit System now in operation, it is particularly important for Swiss dual nationals to travel using valid Swiss identification when entering the Schengen area. Please plan renewals well in advance. Given the limited resources of our Consulates, early

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planning will become even more important. In recent years, the Board and management have received numerous individual motions and requests. Some reflected misunderstandings about how a council with advisory roles operates. The Council therefore decided to establish a working group to review and modernize its rules and regulations. I was elected to this group.

Another important topic was the reputation of Swiss citizens living abroad within Switzerland. There is a perception among some people in Switzerland that Swiss Abroad benefit disproportionately from Swiss social institutions. This is not the case: eligibility for Swiss benefits depends on contributions made. Swiss Abroad also ease pressure on Swiss social and healthcare systems, as they generally do not receive Swiss health insurance or hardship-related social support. This misunderstanding needs to be addressed more clearly.

Our US delegation believes that the most effective response to such prejudice is to demonstrate the contribution made by the 836,000 Swiss Abroad to Switzerland. Across the U.S., Swiss companies and Swiss entrepreneurs create hundreds of thousands, if not (directly or indirectly) millions of jobs. In my view, Switzerland will need to communicate this much better. On top of that, Swiss abroad who retain property in Switzerland pay taxes there, and those living overseas also reduce demand on Switzerland's social and healthcare systems.

CHRIS STERN
DELEGATE USA ATLANTA CONSULAR DISTRICT
CHRISJBSTERN@GMAIL.COM

For further information on the 2026 CSA meeting, look to page 34 in the main publication.

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