



**of Bluffton & Pandora**

**P.O. Box 5**

**Bluffton, OH 45817**

**Schumacher Homestead**

**8350 Bixel Rd.**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**PRESIDENT** Gary Wetherill

**SECRETARY** Todd Rainey

**TREASURER** John Burkhart

**CURATOR** Keith Sommer

Jeff Althaus

Seth Bixel

Dale Bridenbaugh

Dan Diller

Susie Gratz

Ron Lora

David Sehlhorst

Pat Sheidler

Nancy Yeager

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Annual Household \$30

Annual Sustaining \$100

Life \$1,000

Mailing labels show current standing

Mail checks payable to Swiss

Community Historical Society

to PO Box 5, Bluffton OH 45817.

# SPRING 2022



**Seth Bixel does a balancing act with a chest of drawers, story on Page 3**

## President's Update

Well, it's been a weird two years for everyone and the Society is no exception. We have lost out on most of our programming since 2019. Even though we were not able to do the things they way we ordinarily do, including meeting as a board, the committees were still active doing their respective duties. We were able to hold some virtual tours of the Homestead that spread our reach to people who have not been able to visit. Our Facebook volunteers have kept up a constant flow of information and interesting tidbits to keep readers engaged.

### **FITTING OUT**

The fitting out committee has been able to add a couple of wonderful pieces of furniture to the house. You can read more about those pieces elsewhere in the

## President's update continued from Page 1

newsletter. I've also seen a beautiful walnut dry sink in Seth's workshop that is waiting for a spot to be chosen to put it in the house. These are all pieces which directly connect to the settlement.

### **HOMESTEAD BARN**

If you have driven by the Homestead in the last few months, you might have seen that the Operations Committee has been working on the Schumacher barn, including fresh paint and most obviously the addition of large doors on the end of the barn. Thanks to some designated gifts in the capital campaign, the operations committee has begun the work to restore the barn to its original configuration with the barn doors on the end of the barn. The bank will eventually be moved and the foundation repaired where the bank is now.



### **HERITAGE CENTER BARN**

The move to bring another Swiss Settlement barn onto the site and repurpose it as a Heritage Center is moving along. Three of us met with our chosen timber framers on Wednesday, Feb 9 in Killbuck, Ohio. They will likely be deconstructing the barn we plan to move this summer. The framers encouraged us to not be impatient as we begin the challenging task of converting an old building to modern use. We will be working early on with their engineer/architect who specializes in timber frame conversion. He will work with our engineer/architect to make this as painless as possible. Thank you all for your contributions to the Capital Campaign. If you know of anyone who may be a potential donor, please let us know as we continue to fund raise.

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## **ANNUAL FUNDRAISING**

Speaking of fund raising, when we sent out partnering letters this year many of you added extra funds to your annual dues to be used for operations. Thank you so much! It is unfortunate that even in the midst of a pandemic the heat and electric bills still need to be paid.

## **CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE**

We did host a Christmas open house in December with some precautions in effect. Nearly one hundred people toured the decorated house over the two-day period. Thank you to the docents and board members who volunteered that day.

## **SPRING MEETING AND SWISS DAY**

Looking to the future, we are currently planning on a Spring Meeting and Swiss Day, provided we are able to find a site that allows larger groups. The Spring Meeting topic will be on the Native Peoples who would have been in this area when the settlers arrived. The Swiss Day program is to be determined.

Another interesting bit of information; the Swiss American Society, a national organization, has contacted us requesting an article for their Swiss American Historical Review. JoAnne Niswander has completed the article and we are looking for some photos to include. Their website is [www.swiss-american-historical-society.org](http://www.swiss-american-historical-society.org).

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers, committee members and especially the board members who spend untold hours keeping the history of the early Swiss settlers alive. Any undertaking like our Society is impossible without the dedication of folks like you.

Thank you.

**Gary Wetherill, President**

# *Events*

## **Saturday Open Houses**

June 4, July 2, and August 6

Watch your mail, Facebook, email and [BlufftonIcon.com](http://BlufftonIcon.com) for **Spring Meeting and Swiss Day** dates and times.



# Bedroom Furnishings Coming Up!

Three new pieces of furniture were added to the Schumacher House in November 2021. The items included a wardrobe, chest of drawers, and a bed. All pieces are from the community.

The wardrobe is a walnut double compartment piece with a lift off cornice that dates to around middle/late part of the nineteenth century. The three raised panel doors and lift off cornice are indicative of our community.

What is unusual is that the piece is a single unit. Typically our wardrobes can be separated into two halves. Being all one piece meant that the wardrobe needed to be brought in through the upstairs exterior door off the second story porch. The page 1 photo shows Seth Bixel using his lift to move the pieces up to the second story porch of the Schumacher House.

The chest of drawers added is made of ribbon cherry and is dated 1864 under one of the drawers. This is a very early empire style chest of drawers that were typical of the community.

Many of the community's chest of drawers were ornately painted but this one is just as great showing its native wood. The bed is made of curly maple and matches the other three beds currently upstairs in the house. These four matching beds likely date to the end of the nineteenth century.

**By David Sehlhorst, Fitting Out committee member**



# Homestead hosts and visitors

The Interpretation Committee is coordinating Saturday Open Houses on June 4, July 2, and Aug. 6, 2022.

Although 2021 was a difficult year in many ways, I find many reasons for gratitude. The Interpretation Committee chose to schedule all tours rather than conduct Saturday open houses over the summer. Thanks to our 15 dedicated, enthusiastic docents, we were able to lead 12 tours with 120 visitors. We welcomed folks from 28 cities and towns in Ohio, as well as from 11 states, as far away as Florida and Colorado.

Some visitors came as groups of friends looking for something fun to do in the area. They often found us online. Thank you Kaye Phillips and Paula Scott for maintaining Facebook and the website! Many came with family groups as part of a reunion. Some had visited before; all were connecting with their heritage through the Homestead or Swiss Settlement. We hosted a group as part of its Bluffton University class reunion in July. Then in August, 45 members of the Vintage Car Enthusiasts from several states drove their 1930s era vehicles from their weekend base in Findlay.

It would be wonderful if we could once again host school groups. It is a joy to engage the next generation with our local history. Members of the committee are Rachel Friesen, Todd Rainey, Jan Emmert, Nancy Yeager, and Susie Gratz.

**By Susie Gratz, Interpretation Committee Chair**



**Sally Jordan Jones**



**Risser Sleigh**



**Jan Emmert**





"April Fool 1915" message in the Schumacher Homestead workshop

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**SWISS COMMUNITY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
PO BOX 5  
BLUFFTON OH, 45817