SWISS COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

of Bluffton & Pandora
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DIRECTOR Neil Allen

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MEMBERSHIP
Annual Family $50
Golden $150
Diamond $1,000

Nov 5 2026

FALL 2026

Schumacher Homestead and Swiss Heritage Center

Interim President's Report

By Chuck Niswander

This has been an interesting four months since assuming the role of interim presidency. Often, when a change in leadership occurs in an off-election year there are usually many serious problems that need to be addressed. This was not the case with this transition.

A year ago our past president Gary Wetherill was guiding us through the final stages of the Heritage Center completion. Thank you, Gary, for your leadership over these past years that you served the society. Also, a big thank you to Lois, his wife, who was a great support and encouragement during his time in office.



When I took office the Center was complete and was hosting groups, receptions and school events. The completed Heritage Center has many historical artifacts that have been professionally-displayed by Mr. Neil Allen, who is a professional museum curator and archivist working for us. We are so fortunate to have him. As I write this report, we have just completed our annual fall festival weekend. It was a beautiful day and over 2500 people took advantage of the beautiful weather. For the second time they could go through the Heritage Center and see all of the displays that our exhibitors had set up for us.

CONTINUES

INTERIM PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONTINUED

They could also see our historic items displayed on the walls. Outside, the kids were able to play in a straw maze, fish in our creek, play old-fashioned games and, with their parents, enjoy oven-baked bread, apple butter with Swiss cheese, a cold glass of cider, soup heated over an open fire and a bag of fire-popped popcorn for dessert. I can't forget our famous smoked cheese that was available to take home and enjoy. During the day, we had various local music groups that entertained us with stringed instruments, folk music and gospel music.

We also had people demonstrating their crafts: blacksmithing, tinsmithing, bucket making and weaving.

Running a historical society with many older buildings has many challenges. Repairs are always needed. We are blessed with many faithful volunteers who give us many hours dedicated to keeping the property in good order. With my next report, I will keep you apprised of some of the major repairs that we know will need attention. You may want to make a year-end gift to help us in one of these areas.

EDITOR'S CORNER

Gene Aufderhaar is taking the helm as editor of the SHS Newsletter. He brings to the task a knowledge of German and an affinity for Germanic culture and heritage.

Gene holds a Master of Arts in German from BGSU (having studied 3 semesters in Salzburg, Austria) and taught at the high school and college levels for 33 years before retiring in 2022.

He has been to Switzerland a few times. Gene feels "at home" serving with the Swiss Historical Society as a docent and is looks forward to his efforts on the newsletter.



NEW ACQUISITIONS

Compiled by Neil Allen

- Hand-painted wine bottle and small trunk brought from Switzerland to Bluffton in 1871 by Jacob and Lena Schnegg from Randy Houtz
- Two-man crosscut saw, Adam Steiner and Anna Spallinger family fraktur and foot warmer from William Luginbuhl
- Large slate chalkboard from Jim Schaffer
- Wooden shovel and corn stalk knife from Chuck Niswander
- Hay sling
- Pulleys and corn sheller from Edward Bucher
- Schumacher Stone Company advertising level
- Eyeglasses, Pandora Times advertising pencil, razor, letter opener, and key belonging to Ezra Bucher from Richard Bucher
- 150 Years Along the Riley 1832-1982 from Gary Wetherill
- 11 wooden butchering gambrels from the Et Cetera Shop
- Set of Alfred Meakin Royal Ironstone China, ice fishing box & auger, and Diller family table were purchased with the Collections Acquisition Funds.



2026 FALL FESTIVAL SNAPSHOTS



By Gene Aufderhaar

The society's 2026 Fall Festival was the place to be! The displays and activities wove together to create an animated atmosphere of bygone days. Here are a few highlights:

Gary Weatherill with his Silkie (a chicken originally from China). He also showed Appenzeller Spitzhauben ("pointy heads"); and Dominique, which would have been the fowl that the Schumachers raised.

Lois Weatherill, in the Heritage Center, displayed an array of Make-Do pincushions and also runners, including the inspiration for her creations (purchased some 50 years ago at an auction).



Paul Nusbaum grew interested in prehistoric tools after finding artifacts while hand-hoeing soybeans on the farm, near Pandora. His art faithfully replicates handles, shafts and other tools that would have long predated the Swiss settlement or even the Ottawa and Shawnee, he says, belonging rather to the archaic time some 8,000 years ago.



Sharon Hammer Baker, 19th Century Living History Artist dressed for the part and put pen to paper to immortalize plantings in the Kitchen Garden.



John Law, who is a White Cooper, was set up outside the summer kitchen. He demonstrated construction and brought tools for display and small barrels for sale. His daughter, Annatina, basket maker, in period guise on the Homestead's lower porch likewise displayed her wares.



Not soap, but soup (ham & bean) was served up by Joyce and Tom Schumacher, who–you guessed it–are indeed 4th generation descendants of the family!





CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

December 5-6 from 2:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Tours of the Schumacher farmhouse decorated for the holidays, songs of the season, candle-making, children's crafts, refreshments, and a visit from Father Christmas!



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