



Swiss Heritage Society Messenger

Mission Statement: To spark and sustain an interest in the cultural heritage of Berne, Indiana and southern Adams County by promoting learning through discovery.

Swiss Heritage Society, Inc.

June 2013

Berne, Indiana 46711

Neuenschwander Now Serving as Executive Director

By JIM LANGHAM

A major change took place at Swiss Heritage Village this past winter when former executive director Doug Milligan turned over the leadership as executive director to Debby Neuenschwander.

Milligan noted that he had enjoyed his time as director and appreciated those who he had worked with, but had made the decision that he wanted to spend more time with his family and friends.

Prior to accepting her new position as executive director, Neuenschwander had served as a docent, directing tours and becoming acquainted with the rich heritage of the village history and those connected with it.

Neuenschwander graduated from Belmont High School in 1990 and then attended Anderson University where she received a major in Christian Ministries and a minor in German. For three years, between 1999 and 2002, she served an international mission organization in Innsbruck, Austria. There she was involved

with a Christian bookstore and worked with refugees as well as a teen ministry.

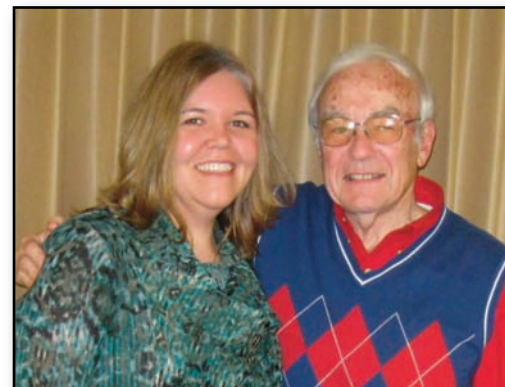
Neuenschwander's husband, Mark, works at Berne Hi-Way Hatchery, Inc.

In addition to serving as a docent, Neuenschwander had also gained insight into Swiss Heritage Village life as a member of the board of directors.

"It is rewarding to be a part of something much bigger than me - the village workers, the body of knowledge and all that goes with Swiss Heritage Village," said Neuenschwander. "The total picture is so much bigger than me and what I do. I love looking at the people's faces. You can see when they understand something or connect with it. I like it when kids' faces light up as if to say, 'you mean they lived like this?'"

Neuenschwander said that she feels very fortunate to be employed by an organization she feels for so deeply and loves. She appreciates the strong support she has sensed from the local community.

"I look forward to seeing things expand and to what we can do with our program-



ming," said Neuenschwander. "This year, I hope to get a feel for things and see how everything works."

"I look forward to seeing people continue to have the opportunity to share in the heritage our town has," continued the director. "One of the things that I am excited about is seeing new people trained as a docent. We welcome those who would like to volunteer or assist at any time."

Neuenschwander can be contacted at debbyn@swissheritage.org or by phoning the village at 260-589-8007.

Village loses a foundational friend in the passing of Amos Schwartz

By JIM LANGHAM



It is hard to walk very far at the Swiss Heritage Village without reminiscing about the hard work and dedication of legendary village pioneer, Amos Schwartz.

In fact, the bridge

visitors cross over when they enter the village was placed with the expertise and care of Schwartz who placed his trademark restoration for covered bridge restoration symbolically at the village entrance.

Once inside the village, those familiar with Schwartz will recall his love and admiration for the famed cider press. Schwartz not only enjoyed operating the press, he enjoyed demonstrating its character to visitors and was even called upon to tell its story several times to area media.

Unfortunately for the village, Schwartz's energetic work ethic finally drained this past winter when he passed away after a long and hard-fought battle with cancer.

"When I go into a barn or an old building I always try to look for the good in that building, but not the bad," Schwartz often said of his restoration projects. "The bad we can fix but we want the building to be known as, good."

There was little question in those who knew Schwartz that he was a good representation of all that was good in historical restoration, love for his family and commitment to God during his lifetime of service to many.

He was best known for restoring covered bridges, old barns and other historic structures. In addition, he was affiliated with the Historic Landmark Foundation of Indiana, Indiana State Fair Pioneer Village, Limberlost Land Association, Mennonite Disaster Service, Swiss Heritage Society of Berne,

Berne Rotary Club and the Evangelical Church.

Other projects that Schwartz was especially proud of was that of Judy O'Bannon (wife of the late Frank O'Bannon, former governor of Indiana) where he was asked to assist in restoring her home in New Corydon.

One story he took great pride in was that which appeared in Outdoor Indiana Magazine and featured his involvement with Swiss Heritage Village.

Schwartz, a member of the Indiana Landmark Foundation Board, said at the time that as he travels around the state, he is most often asked about the Swiss Clock Tower, Swiss Heritage village and the cider press.

Near the end of his life, Schwartz remarked that his attachment to older buildings and places like Swiss Heritage Village reminded him of his ancestors and their Christian faith. He noted that it didn't take much to bring tears to his eyes

Storytelling Workshop in Wabash

Ask any of the docents at Swiss Heritage Village what they enjoy about their job and before long you will hear each one more than likely begin to share a story. Stories, after all, are what bring Swiss Heritage Village & Museum to life. Our docents do a fine job of engaging our guests and



introducing them to the history of southern Adams County via the stories that accompany each historical structure on our site.

One definition used for the word docent is "knowledgeable guide", and there are any number of such guides committed to the mission of our organization: To spark and sustain an interest in the cultural heritage of Berne, Indiana and southern Adams County by promoting learning through discovery. While some of our

docents are mainly active during Swiss Days and the Heritage Festival, a smaller number agree to work on a more regular basis, three to sometimes ten hours each week, including Saturdays.

These individuals have taken the time to study and learn about all of the buildings at Swiss Heritage Village, and they routinely provide high quality tours to our guests.

Whether it is a group of school children heading to the one room brick school, a family going to see the cheese house, or a retired couple riding the golf cart over to the church, as each person crosses the little red bridge he or she receives something special from us. Each person, young and old alike, gets the opportunity to see and experience through most of their senses life as it once was lived. The docent accompanies these people on that journey and helps them to learn. We appreciate our docents very much, and all of the time and effort they put into preparing for their tours.

Earlier in March, seven Swiss Heritage docents met at the Corner Depot in Bluffton and piled into board member, Chris Pulver's van, making the trip to Wabash for a 1 day workshop. It was a valuable experience for both our more seasoned as well as our new docents. The workshop was offered through the Indiana Historical Society and provided participants with many thought provoking discussions and instruction on how to improve the way we tell our stories. Complete with "Show and Tell" the day challenged and inspired each one to consider their audience.

Have you ever been on a tour at Swiss Heritage Village? Perhaps you have family or friends who will be visiting the area this summer and might like a tour. We at Swiss Heritage Society encourage you to make it a point to check out our village and museum this year. There is a wide variety of artifacts to be enjoyed... something for all ages. Our docents would love to tell you all about them!

Greetings.....

..... from the Executive Director

Can it really be June already? It is hard for me to believe that five months ago I began my new job as Executive Director for Swiss Heritage Village & Museum. Right away, I was impressed by the number of dedicated and hard working individuals who have given countless hours and dollars to this organization! I feel privileged to have such a supportive network of people working alongside me to make 2013 another successful year.

For those who may have lost track, this year marks our 28th year of operation. As in years past, a handful of tours have already been given to area elementary students including 75 students from the Spring Hill Amish School and a group from the Marsh Foundation in Van Wert, OH. It is always exciting to see the students who enjoy learning through their experiences with us, and our docents play a vital role in that learning process.

Let me brag for just a moment about our docents. In March I traveled to Wabash with six of them to attend a workshop where we were given instruction and training on how to present real, compelling stories that make our history more relevant to our visitors and community. This was a fun day that taught and challenged both the veterans as well as those who are just beginning. Each of these individuals paid their own way and I applaud their dedication to what they do, providing visitors with the best possible experience when they come to Swiss Heritage Village.

Another exciting road trip was made in March when a group of three traveled with me to Chicago to bring back a large number of items which had been donated to our museum as well as our town from the Erdmann Schmocker estate. A sampling of items has been specially arranged and can be enjoyed, along with some other newly designed displays, in our ever expanding museum. I encourage you to make an effort to walk through this summer and enjoy it!

Swiss Heritage Society, Inc. is a non-profit organization that depends upon its members each year to provide necessary funding through memberships as well as other donations we receive to help us operate a successful historic site. We are very fortunate to have so many friends who show up as dedicated volunteers, financial supporters, and willing board members. Please consider becoming a member, if you are not, and be sure to join us for the events we have scheduled in 2013. Your support is key to our success!

-----Debby Neuenschwander, Executive Director

Christmas Eve with a Swiss Heritage Touch



As tradition would have it, the Christmas Eve Services (6 and 9 P.M.) at Swiss Heritage Village, always include the German reading of the passage from Luke which narrates Christ's birth, and 2012 was no exception. Marie (Mrs. Harold) Nussbaum whose family had donated the large German bible displayed in the church and Jasmin Thürich, a foreign exchange student from a small community near Hamburg, Germany, served as our German readers. English readers were third grade student, Kaleb Stevens, and fifth grader, Curtis Sprunger, both from South Adams Elementary school.

Berne native, Rev. Jeff Gaskill, provided the evening's devotional and recalled growing up in a house just a "stone's throw" away from the Heritage Village. He shared that as a young boy one Christmas

Eve in particular became a life changing moment for him personally, when he for the first time he truly understood the meaning of Jesus' birth. His challenge for us that evening and the whole year was that we would take time to ponder what Jesus' birth means for us and our lives.

Finally, Christmas Eve would not be complete without music and the Swiss Heritage service did not disappoint! Byron Fox led the congregation in a variety of beloved carols & hymns while the talented vocalist, Leah (Hirschy) Jones sang and signed a couple of selections for us. Her exquisite voice and the beauty of watching her sign truly made the songs come to life. Prelude music was provided on the old pump organ by Debby Neuenschwander.

America May Run on Dunkin' But, Swiss Heritage Runs on Volunteers!

Thank you hardly seems adequate to express the gratitude we have for all of our incredibly dedicated and hardworking volunteers at Swiss Heritage Village & Museum. What do our volunteers do, you ask? The short answer would be "almost everything". However, in order to provide you with a better picture of what gets accomplished (and how YOU could become involved), here is a list that has been composed:

- Answering phones
- Assisting with computers
- Baking cookies
- Building projects
- Cleaning toilets
- Creating displays
- Decorating
- Festival help
- Folding letters
- Fundraising
- Gardening
- Greeting customers
- Inventory
- Mopping floors
- Moving furniture
- Painting
- Planting flowers
- Providing food
- Repairs
- Setting up tables/chairs
- Sewing
- Shopping
- Swiss Days help
- Taking down tables/chairs
- Washing Windows
- Watering flowers
- Weeding
- ...and much more!



"We can help, too!"



"Taking a break and enjoying some goodies."



"Hard workers taking time for hot chocolate."



"This is so much fun!"

If you would like to volunteer just call 589-8007 and let us know how you would like to be involved.

An hour or two may not seem like much, but it is a tremendous help and we would be very grateful for it.

First Tours of the Season Given On April 19th

To begin, a tour was given to Audrie Nelsen of Muncie and her friend, Beverly York, who was visiting from Coronado, California. These ladies agreed to let their tour be used as a teaching time for our new docents. Long time docent, Charlene Duff, engaged everyone in a wide variety of stories and information she has gained through her years at Swiss Heritage Village. "The tour was just great," stated Audrie, "and we appreciated the use of the golf cart along with the entire experience."

Secondly, a tour was given to Spring Hill School of Berne, IN. Seventy-five students, three teachers, and a handful of helpers enjoyed touring the Luginbill farmhouse, the Hartman cheese house, the one-room brick school, and finally, the Baumgartner church. Students listened attentively as presentations were made in each of the four buildings about how life had been for the Swiss Mennonite immigrants who settled in southern Adams County. In some cases, 19th century life as described by the docents was not all that different from what these students know, today. "Out of all the school tours given at Swiss Heritage Village, your group definitely has the most in common with the early settlers of this

area," one docent remarked.

One item that is never within our control is the weather. Who would have imagined on this day in April the temperature would get stuck in the 30's and the wind chill would be a mere 28 degrees! In spite of the cold, blustery winds and the extremely soggy ground, it was a pleasure to host these two tours and begin the 2013 season.



Third Annual Swiss Heritage Benefit Auction September 10th

Over the course of the past two years Swiss Heritage Village officials have organized two successful fundraising auctions and used the money primarily for repairs and improvements at the village and museum. According to executive director Debby Neuenschwander plans are already underway for a third auction and she is hopeful that this year will again result in raising much needed funds. "We are so grateful for all of the donations we receive as well as the support from those who attend

the auction," stated Neuenschwander. She went on to encourage the readers to mark their calendars NOW for both the Heritage Festival on September 7 and the auction on September 10. "The benefit auction is our largest fundraiser of the year thanks to the generous businesses and individuals in our community."

Those wishing to inquire about this year's auction can contact Debby Neuenschwander by calling 260-589-8007 or debbyn@swissheritage.org.



Painting Project Waits in the Wings

The historic Switzer Barn is in need of a fresh coat of paint and seed money has been planted to help make it a reality. Two \$1000 donations were given at the conclusion of 2012 specifically earmarked for the painting of the barn. It was noted at that time that the barn is a large part of the "first impression" we make on people as they drive onto our property.

Estimates were obtained and the lowest bid which includes doing the roof came in at \$12,000. The First Bank of Berne recently contributed to the Swiss Heritage Society and a portion of that money will also be applied to the barn.

"The barn is just one of the about 10 projects needing attention," stated

Debby Neuenschwander, "and money raised at this year's Haystack Luncheon may also be applied towards painting expenses." Ideally, Swiss Heritage officials would like to see the remainder of the funds come together in time to have the barn painted this summer. If you would be interested in contributing to the Paint the Barn project contact the office at 260-589-8007. You may also send checks to the Swiss Heritage Society, Inc., P.O. Box 88, Berne, IN, 46711. Be sure to mark your donation "Paint the Barn".



Haystack Luncheon

The annual Haystack Luncheon will be held on Sunday, June 9, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the historic Switzer Barn at Swiss Heritage Village.

Come enjoy a tasty lunch with friends followed by a stroll through the museum to discover some of this year's newly displayed items. A drawing will be held in the barn at 1 p.m. for the lucky winner of a commemorative silver coin featuring the Baumgartner church, a \$57 value.

New and renewed memberships to the Swiss Heritage Society make one eligible for the drawing and you need not be present to win. It's not too late to mail your membership, today! The luncheon is provided on a donation basis.

Devotional: Time was plentiful at the old country church

By JIM LANGHAM

Tales of dedication to a faith-based life abounded around our supper table when I was a young boy.

One of the most moving stories of commitment was that of my grandfather, Joseph Cook, and his dedication to attending every service during an old-fashioned revival, even though it lasted six weeks and he had to walk four miles round trip every night because he couldn't drive a car.

Grandpa Cook had epilepsy and was told early in life that he was to never drive a car. But that didn't stop his commitment to building barns, many of them east of Ceylon. It was said that each Monday morning he would take his tool box, start whistling and walk to the site of his latest project. During the week, he would stay with the family where the barn was building built; then on Fridays he would start whistling again and walk back to the family home

in Ceylon.

But some of the most courageous and challenging stories of grandpa's faith surround his determination to attend revivals that were held at the old North Point Church which was originally located on the northwest corner of the first intersection east of Amishville. When I was child, there were still cement blocks in the field where the foundation of that church had stood.

Ironically, the church had moved on. When the Ceylon Church burnt out on Easter Sunday in the early 1920's, congregational members purchased the North Point Church, which had been closed for many years, and moved it to Ceylon, rolling it on logs across the Wabash River.

Then, in the 1940's, after the Ceylon Church closed, the same structure was moved to Geneva and became the Nazarene Church for over 50 years.

Back to Grandpa Cook and the

revivals, it was said that each night, Grandpa would leave on foot and walk to the east, through the covered bridge and eventually the service two miles east of his home, regardless of the weather. Family members also reported that there was a path worn in the grass behind the family barn where grandpa would walk and pray for his healing.

Grandpa Cook never quite received the physical healing he was looking for, but they say that he never stopped whistling when he walked, never stopped praying and never let loose of his stronghold of his faith in Jesus.

It's no wonder, in spite of his physical condition, that one of his favorite Bible verses was Jeremiah 6:16, "This is what the Lord says: Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."

Village Receives Extraordinary Gift From Schmocker Collection

By JIM LANGHAM

Due to the interest of the late Erdmann Schmocker, a former professor, Swiss Heritage Village Museum has received an elaborate collection of correspondence and Swiss-related items of Swiss national interest.

Schmocker, in particular, was a close friend with Delbert and Irene Sprunger and made many trips to visit Sprungers, who are now deceased. During his visits, he took many pictures of Berne and Swiss-related heritage items in the community.

Most recently, one of Schmocker's students, Ward Miller, from Chicago, has been corresponding with mayoral secretary Becky Sprunger to arrange donations and instructions of gifts from Schmocker's personal items.

"I'm enclosing a folder of correspondence from Mr. Schmocker's personal files with the Sprungers," said Miller in

correspondence with Sprunger. "It does reflect their close friendship and commitment to all things Swiss and Bern/Berne-related."

Miller also enclosed several flags, banners and crests commissioned or collected by Schmocker over a period of time. They were used for many presentations, lectures and festivals that they often organized and participated in.

Miller said that he felt that a place such as the museum would be best suited for the collected correspondence and heritage items. In addition, Miller included two Plexiglas-laser-cut crests that were placed atop his fireplace mantel for many years of his Chicago apartment.

Schmocker was born in Bern, Switzerland in 1931 and received a diploma in 1951 from Gewerbeschule in Bern. He came to the United States with his parents. He moved to Chicago



in 1954 and studied at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

While teaching, Schmocker worked in the professional world as an architect, starting as an apprentice at A.A. Bronnimann Architecture in Bern, Switzerland. In 1964-65 he worked in Cleveland and then moved to Chicago where he held a position as architect and city planner for the Public Building Commission in Chicago in 1968.

Schmocker passed away on Nov. 9, 2012, following heart surgery.

Did You Know.....

Estate planning is a serious matter. It involves leaving a family legacy and often a set of goals and values which need to be discussed with the entire family. Swiss Heritage Society reminds you that indeed you can choose to include such organizations as ours in your estate plan. We would welcome the opportunity to assist you should you ever decide to look further into it.