New Glarus Historical Society

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2024 Board of Directors

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David Hustad, Vice President

John Freitag, Treasurer

Carol Hassemer, Secretary

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Jackie Judd

Al Lienhardt

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Erica Loeffelholtz, Newsletter Editor

Board of Directors Update
By Carol Hassemer

The annual meeting of the New Glarus Historical Society was held on Sunday, March 17th, at the Chalet Landhaus.

The keynote speaker was David Desimone, site director of Black Point Estate in Lake Geneva. His presentation was entitled, “Why Old Places Matter.” He discussed the reasons why old places matter and should be preserved for current and future generations, and shared many examples of local, regional, and national “old places.”

President Larry Klassy thanked the many board directors, volunteers, cashiers, and guides who helped make the 2023 season successful. Attendance was down from the previous year at about 3,000, and there were only seven group tours. He reported that visitors came from 26 countries and 46 states.

Treasurer John Freitag presented the 2023 financial report. The organization's total income for the year, including museum admissions, gift shop sales, membership dues, gifts, and other contributions, was $49,661. The total operating expenses for 2023 were $39,069, leaving the Historical Society a net profit of $10,592 for the year, an increase of almost $10,000 from 2022. He reported that budgetary funds were spent on a new point-of-sale system and advertising. Paid membership remains flat.

If you would like a copy of the entire 2023 financial report presented and accepted at the annual meeting, please e-mail the Historical Society at admin@swisshistoricalvillage.org or call us at 608-527-2317. John will be happy to send you a copy.

Board member Dave Hustad gave an update on buildings/grounds/Society activities in 2023 and planned activities for 2024:

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Board of Directors Update (continued)

- New business software (Clover) was implemented for admissions and point-of-sale.
- The Historical Society now has an internet connection to faciliate our work.
- New panels are being installed in the Hall of History, thanks to a generous donation from Switzerland. We anticipate the new panels will be installed by opening day.
- Our fiberglass cow, Buttercup (Butterblume), will soon be painted, and will greet visitors at the Entrance Building.
- A new roof for the Cheese Factory was completed, and we're now planning for replacing at least three cedar shake roofs on other structures.
- A large tree to the right of the Entrance Building needed to be taken down due to extensive damage during a storm.
- May 5th was the 2023 Clean-up Day with a great team of high school students helping. This year the Clean-up Day is May 10th.
- The Pie and Ice Cream Social (new in 2023), Commemorative Church Service, and Harvest Fest were very successful and will occur once again in 2024.
- The author presentation on one-room school houses by Susan Apps-Bodilly was co-sponsored with the public library. Ms. Apps-Bodilly will return this summer to present on her book about gardens and seeds.
- There have been issues with unauthorized use of the Society's photographs/archives and the WHS Digital Collections materials that they own, for personal or commercial gain.The Board is addressing the policies and procedures.
- Outstanding projects, in addition to what's listed above, include perimeter fence repair and painting, updating the insurance on the Society's buildings, reaching out to and working with local businesses, and landscaping the areas where Buttercup/ Butterblume will be installed.
- The Society needs help from members. Sharing new ideas is welcome as well.

Board members John Colstad, David Hustad, Larry Klassy, and Al Lienhardt's terms expired. John Colstad chose not to run again. We thank John for his 15 years of Board service. His director position remains open, but the other three board members were re-elected for additional three-year terms by Society members present at the meeting.

The Board of Directors made a proposal to delete Article VIII of the Bylaws, "Free Education Tour," due to the ongoing increases in operational expenses at the Swiss Historical Village & Museum. A nominal flat fee will be charged for each class visit. This proposal was approved at the annual meeting.

"The feelings of continuity, memory, and identity from old places gives us sense of who we are. The experience of beauty and the awe of the sacred at old places deepens our connections to a broader world and fosters a sense of empathy with others. Knowing the place where our ancestors are from gives people a deep sense of belonging. Learning history at the place where it happened is a viscerally memorable experience that stays with us for the rest of our lives.

The simple act of continuing to use an existing place is one of the most effective things people can do for a more sustainable world. Old places inspire creativity and foster a flourishing economy. The bottom line is the preservation of old places provides profound material, emotional, sociological, and spiritual benefits for all."

(concluding slide from Mr. Desimone's presentation)

Buttercup the cow is in the process of being painted, and will soon be greeting visitors at the Entrance Building.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Swiss Historical Village and New Glarus Historical Society depends on volunteers to keep our organization running smoothly. We have a number of volunteer opportunities available this year!

Clean-Up Day on the Museum Grounds
Friday, May 10th at 8:30 AM

Volunteers are needed to help get the museum grounds looking good ahead of our opening Memorial Day Weekend. Bring a pair of gardening gloves if you have them!

Cataloging Project
June through mid-October

We are undertaking a hugely ambitious project this year, as we begin cataloging our entire collection into our new Past Perfect software. Carol Hassemer and Erica Loeffelholtz are in charge of the project, and we are looking for tech-savvy volunteers who enjoy detail-oriented work to assist.

What is involved in the project? We're glad you asked! You'll first receive training in using the Past Perfect software, and once you're comfortable with it, you'll be entering data into the catalog. Data entry includes typing item descriptions into designated fields, and uploading photographs and PDF files to each record. For more info, contact us at admin@swisshistoricalvillage.org.

Newsletter Contributors
April through November

Is there a story or photo you'd like to see featured in this newsletter? We are currently looking for volunteer contributors for 2024. All contributions should be directly related to New Glarus or Green County history. Ideas include (but are not limited to):

- Photographs and biographies of past communtiy members
- Reminiscences about past festivals, holidays, or events
- Photographs and stories of treasured family heirlooms

If you have an idea for something you'd like to contribute, please contact Erica at eloeffelholtz@gmail.com.

Behind the Scenes

Winter months at the museum are typically spent working on projects that would be too disruptive to complete during our open season.

One of our major projects this year was replacing the roof on the Cheese Factory. We'd like to thank Corbin Judd for the fantastic job he did. We're thrilled that the artifacts in the Cheese Factory will now be better protected from potential weather damage.

Correction

In the November 2024 newsletter, we identified these men as Abraham and Fridolin Schindler, sons of Andreas Schindler and Dorothea Knobel.

We were off by one generation. These men are actually Abraham (1946-1926) and Fridolin (1844-1898) Schindler, sons of Fridolin Schindler (1805-1872) and wife Elsbeth Schiesser.

Many thanks to Bob Elmer for catching that! We apologize for any confusion.

The New Glarus Public Library Celebrates 90 Years!

By Erica Loeffelholtz

As part of their 90th anniversary celebration, the New Glarus Public Library now has limited-edition library cards designed by local artists.
(From top to bottom: Linda Schiesser, Pam Ruschman, Rebekah Ely, and Annika Ziperski)
Limit one card per patron.

The New Glarus Public Library is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year! In order to find out more about the beginnings of our little library, I've been combing through old issues of the New Glarus Post to see what I can learn.

In 1854, less than ten years after New Glarus was founded, Joshua Wild started up a small library of German-language books at his store. Borrowers could pay 4 cents to borrow a book for one week, 16 cents to keep the book for a month, and for a fee of 40 cents, the book could be borrowed for three months. Additional fees for late, lost, and damaged books applied. This anecdote was shared by Wild's daughter, Maria Kundert, in the November 7, 1934 edition of the Post.

New Glarus' first attempt at a free lending library began back in the 1880s, when a group of citizens got together and each purchased three books to begin a library collection.These books were housed in the office of the Lumber Yard, and lent out to interested persons. The library reportedly operated in this manner for several years before fizzling out.

Another attempt occurred in the early 1900s, when Miss Margaret Stafford, principal of New Glarus schools, led a group of girls in collecting a number of books, which they then lent out for a small sum each. The group even wrote to philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller to try to persuade them to donate money for a library in New Glarus, but to no avail.

Other bids for a library were made throughout the years, with varying levels of success, but it wasn't until the autumn of 1934 that the idea really took hold throughout the community. Mrs. Appolonia Zweifel, a teacher, took the lead in circulating a petition to gauge local interest in a public library. Officers of various local clubs and societies pledged to support a library should it be organized. The petition was formally presented to the Village Board in October of 1934, and the Board quickly approved the idea, stating that they would provide a room for the library if Mrs. Zweifel and her cohorts could make suitable arrangements for library operations.

Appolonia moved swiftly. Donations of money and books were solicited, book shelves were acquired, and Appolonia offered to serve as head librarian, free of charge, for the first year. A library board was appointed, and the library opened to the public on November 28th. By the end of the library's first week of operation, over 150 books had been eagerly checked out by community members of all ages.

Continued on next page...

New Glarus Public Library continued

In those early days, the library's hours of operation were very limited. They were open Wednesday evenings from seven to nine o'clock, and on Saturdays afternoons from one to five-thirty p.m. and again from seven to nine o'clock. The limited availability of the library didn't dampen enthusiasm for the library though. Throughout the rest of the 1930s, the community continued to donate additional books, and raise funds through various activities, such as card parties and movie screenings.

After the library's first year, the library board voted to keep Appolonia on as librarian – she was granted a salary of $75.00 a year in 1935, and in 1936 the village board voted to raise it to $100.00! In total, Appolonia served the community as librarian for thirteen years, resigning in the summer of 1947, when Fay Zentner was appointed as the new librarian.

Over the decades, the library has seen many changes, including moving into a larger, newly renovated space in 1984. As the community of New Glarus has grown and changed, the library has done its best to keep up with the needs of its patrons. In 2023, we saw nearly 21,000 library visits. The New Glarus Public Library currently has over 1,600 registered card-holders, and 152 patrons signed up for new cards last year. And while you may hear reports in the news that people are no longer reading very much, you can't prove it by us. Last year we circulated nearly 42,000 physical items and had an additional 10,400 checkouts of digital items through Libby, Wisconsin's online library catalog.

Community support for the New Glarus Public Library remains strong, and our staff love working here. The library has many interesting events for all ages planned for the coming year, so if you haven't visited us lately, stop in soon to see what's new!

Upcoming Events

Friday, April 26th
2:00 to 4:00 PM

Family Tree Friday
New Glarus Public Library
319 2nd Street
April's event will focus on the resources available through the Hathi Trust and Internet Archive

Thursday, May 9th
4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Culver's Community Giving Event
Culver's of New Glarus
1405 Highway 69

Saturday, May 25th
10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Opening day for the Swiss Historical Village Museum!
Visit soon to see our new Hall of History exhibit!

Thursday, June 27th
6:00 to 7:30 PM

Author event with Susan Apps-Bodilly
Swiss Historical Village
612 7th Avenue
This event is presented in parthership with the New Glarus Public Library.

Ancestry Corner

Appolonia Marty was born June 15, 1892, the daughter of Johann Henry Marty and Barbara Schindler. She was a graduate of New Glarus High School and Milwaukee Teachers College.

On June 18, 1910 Appolonia married Edward Zweifel and they had two sons, one tragically dying in infancy. Edward passed away in 1918 at the age of just 29, a victim of the Spanish Flu epidemic.

In addition to helping to found the New Glarus Public Library in 1934, and serving as head librarian for 13 years, Appolonia also had a 31-year teaching career.

(This photograph comes from our digital archives, and has been edited to show Appolonia alone. The original photo is a group shot of the 1925 NGHS faculty.)

The Bank of New Glarus
Powering Growth in Our Community

We thank The Bank of New Glarus for their support in publishing the New Glarus Historical Society newsletter.

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