New Glarus Historical Society

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Erica Loeffelholtz, Newsletter Editor

2024 Year in Review
By Erica Loeffelholtz

It's been another eventful year here at the Swiss Historical Village. Our 2024 season ended on a high note with our annual Harvest Fest celebration on October 13th. Despite the blustery weather, over 400 people turned out to celebrate New Glarus' pioneer history.

A friend of mine brought her young grandchildren to Harvest Fest this year, and as they made their way to Mike Kazmerski's blacksmithing station, she mentioned that the children's great-grandfather had been a blacksmith. This little piece of living history fascinated her grandson so much that he sat enthralled for nearly an hour, watching Mike's skilled demonstration. We love hearing stories like this!

The list of Harvest Fest vendors, artisans, and other volunteers is too long to mention here, but needless to say it takes dozens of people working together to pull off such a successful event, and we are grateful to each and every one of them for their hard work and dedication.

Throughout the course of our 2024 season, we welcomed visitors from 34 states from New York to California, and 24 countries across five continents, including Australia, Dubai, Kuala Lumpur, Scotland, Vietnam, and of course, many visitors from Switzerland! We're also pleased to say that our bus tour traffic is increasing, although it still is not up to pre-covid levels. Visitors have been very complimentary regarding our tour guides, and we'd like to give a shout-out to Dave Hustad, Kelly Ruschman, Ken Klassy, Tim Pauli, Pete Ott, John Egelsaer, and Abigail Biank for their hard work this summer.

In the archives, we've been working on getting everything cataloged into Past Perfect. Our eventual goal is to have all of our archival materials cataloged, photographed, and available in an online database for members to be able to search. This is a huge project, and I especially want to thank volunteer Ruth Pauli for all her time spent cataloging this summer. Her background in library work and her knowledge of the German language has been extremely helpful.

As always, much work goes on behind the scenes and during the off season in order to keep our museum in good working order. Many thanks to Corbin Judd for his continuing work putting new roofs on several buildings. Battling the ravages of time and weather is a non-stop job, and we so appreciate Corbin's time and talents in keeping things running.

Historic Happenings in New Glarus

This article is particuarly for those of you who no longer live in New Glarus, and may not be up-to-date with all of the happenings here in town. 2024 has been a year of big changes, with more on the way!

As you may know, the New Glarus Public Library is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year. So it seems especially auspicious that on October 7th, Governor Tony Evers announced that the Wisconsin Department of Administration is awarding the Village of New Glarus a grant in the amount of $4,250,000 for the construction of a new library facility! This project has been a long time coming, and the library board and staff are thrilled that our vision for a new library for the community is finally coming true.

The new library will be built at 26 5th Avenue, which is the site of the current New Glarus Town Hall. (The Town of New Glarus will be moving their headquarters to a new location on Highway 39.) Construction will begin in spring of 2025, and the new library will be open to the public by the fall of 2026.

For those of you who may have loved ones buried at the Swiss Church Cemetery, the Church and the Village of New Glarus are nearing an agreement to transfer ownership and maintenance of the cemetery to the Village. Over this past summer, the Village formed a cemetery committee to research the issue, and the committee has been making steady progress. They anticipate that transfer details will be finalized in the coming weeks. The Village is working closely with the Swiss Church to ensure that all of the historic records will be carefully maintained. More news will be forthcoming in the new year.

Other exciting developments around town this year include...

- New inclusive playground equipment was installed at Candy Cane Park, thanks to the fundraising efforts of New Glarus Cares.
- The school district built a new athletic complex on Second Street, and the ribbon cutting ceremony for the elementary school addition is scheduled for December.
- The New Glarus Brewery broke ground on a 65,000 square foot, $55 million addition.
- Renovations to the New Glarus Hotel continue, with an anticipated opening in fall of 2025.

Swiss Pear Bread
A Holiday Tradition

It seems like everyone from New Glarus has their own special family recipe for Biere Brot, or pear bread. The mix of fruit, nuts (or no nuts), and spices often changes from one cook to another. This is the receipe that is held in our archives.

1 C. dried prunes, chopped
1 C. dried pears, chopped
1 C. dried apples, chopped
2 oz. cake of fresh yeast
1 C. warm water
1 tsp. sugar
3 C. liquid (a mix of apple juice, pear cider, and water is tasty!)
5 C. flour
1 C. dark molasses
1 C. brown sugar
2 tsp. salt
4 tsp. cinnamon
4 tsp. whole anise seed
OR
2 tsp. anise extract
2 tsp. cloves
2 tsp. allspice
1/2 C. butter
1 C. walnuts, chopped
1 C. dates
1 C. raisins
7 C. flour

The night before baking, put the dried fruit (prunes, pears, and apples) in a saucepan, add about 3 cups of water, bring to a boil, cover, remove from heat, and let soak overnight.

Crumble the yeast into an extra large bowl; add 1 cup of warm water and 1 teaspoon of sugar. Mix and let stand 5-10 minutes. Add 3 cups of liquid and 5 cups of flour, mixing well. Let rise 30 minutes in a warm place.

Meanwhile, heat the molasses, brown sugar, salt, spices, and butter in a saucepan. Add raisins to warm mixture, but do not boil. Stir in dates and chopped walnuts. Transfer mixture to a very large container and add the 7 cups of flour. Mix well.

Add the molasses dough to the original mix of bread dough with dried fruit. Mix well; and let rise for 2 hours. Divide dough and place into well-greased loaf pans, filling pans only half full. Let rise for 1 hour.

Bake at 325 degrees for one hour or until done. Remove from pans and cool on racks.

Makes enough to gift to the whole neighborhood!

Give the Gift of Heritage this Holiday Season

Are you looking for a unique gift for those hard-to-buy-for folks on your list this year? Why not give them a gift membership to the New Glarus Historical Society? Memberships can be purchased for individuals, couples, and families (two adults plus dependent children under 18 years of age). A one-year membership will provide your recipient with free admission to the Swiss Historical Village throughout our 2025 season, as well as a year-long subscription to our newsletter (8 issues total). Best of all, your gift supports us in our mission of preserving the history and culture of the New Glarus community for generations to come.

To give a gift membership, simply complete the form below and mail it, along with your payment by personal check, to New Glarus Historical Society, PO Box 745, New Glarus, WI 53574. Each of your gift recipients will receive a letter notifying them of your gift, along with their 2025 membership card.

Gift Membership #1

First & Last Name _____
Street Address or PO Box _____
City, State, ZIP _____
Email Address _____

Membership Level (check one)
_____ Individual ($20) _____ Couple ($30) _____ Family ($40)

Gift Membership #2

First & Last Name _____
Street Address or PO Box _____
City, State, ZIP _____
Email Address _____

Membership Level (check one)
_____ Individual ($20) _____ Couple ($30) _____ Family ($40)

Gift Membership #3

First & Last Name _____
Street Address or PO Box _____
City, State, ZIP _____
Email Address _____

Membership Level (check one)
_____ Individual ($20) _____ Couple ($30) _____ Family ($40)

Total Enclosed _____ (Payable by check made out to New Glarus Historical Society)
How would you like your name to appear on the gift notification?
_____

Thank you!

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A Midcentury Christmas
By Erica Loeffelholtz

The 1950s are often remembered as an idyllic time in the United States. The end of World War II ushered in a new era of prosperity and hope. As servicemen returned home, there was a renewed focus on traditional family structure, with husbands as breadwinners and wives staying at home and raising children. Meanwhile the new medium of television reinforced this idea through shows like *Leave it to Beaver* and *The Donna Reed Show*. And perhaps at no time was this vision of the perfect family and home more on display than at Christmas.

What people seem to forget is that those idyllic, magical Christmases were made possible by the unpaid, often unnoticed labor of women. When the flurry of Christmas parties, church socials, school programs, and other events rolled around, the women were working behind the scenes to make everything just right. Cooking enormous meals, baking dozens upon dozens of cookies, bars, and other sweets, sewing costumes, shopping for and wrapping gifts, and decorating the house for the holidays - and all in addition to the everyday chores of home and family.

If you have warm & fuzzy memories of Christmases past, remember to take a moment to thank all of the mothers, grandmothers, aunties, big sisters, schoolteachers, and other women in your life who made those wonderful holidays possible!

Members of the New Glarus Girl Scout Troop were entertained at a Christmas party Sunday from 3 to 6 p.m. at the home of Ruth and Janet Hoesly. Supper was served and gifts were exchanged. Games were participated in by the group.

On Saturday evening the group went Christmas caroling in the village.

(New Glarus Post, December 20, 1950)

One of the gayest and brightest stories of Christmas was unfolded here in an hour and a half Thursday evening as the grade school presented its annual Christmas operetta in the high school gymnasium.

A large cast of color-fully costumed grade pupils told the story of how a little girl sets off in a long but successful search for the Land of the North Star and Santa Claus in the play entitled "In Quest of Santa Claus."

... Mrs. Rosemarie Klassy, school musical instructor, directed the operetta, assisted by grade faculty members.

(New Glarus Post, December 22, 1954)

Mrs. Delmar Zentner and Mrs. Grant Ingwell were in charge of the New Glarus Homemakers' party at the Zwingli House on Friday afternoon. Christmas songs were sung on the program which included a reading by Mrs. Morris Marty and Mrs. Delmar Zentner, Christmas games and the exchanging of gifts. Refreshments were served.

Jams and Jellies were brought to the meeting for the Green county home.

(New Glarus Post, December 20, 1950)

Children in the neighborhood gathered at the Harley Hoesly home Monday afternoon for a Christmas party. Games were played and names had been drawn for the exchange of gifts. Refreshments were served.

Those present were Barbara, Mary, and George Hartman, Billy, Ronald, and Wayne Kuenzi, Norman, Jean, and Joan Fries, Greg and Susan Bauer, Steven Pauli and Bill, Jack, and Jill Hoesly.

(New Glarus Post, December 24, 1952)

The December meeting and Christmas party for the G.U.G.G. Society No. 11 was held Tuesday evening at the Wm. Tell Hall with 85 members taking part.

The following numbers were presented:

A reading, "Are We Spoiling Christmas," by Mrs. Fred V. Stuessy; songs "Star of the East" and "Silent Night" by a trio, Mrs. Harold Ingwell, Mrs. Clayton Streiff, and Mrs. Irving Wild, accompanied by Anna Streiff; accordion solos by Rudy Wieland; songs "Winter Wonderland" and "White Christmas" by Pauline Grossenbacher and Judy Pauli, accompanied by Bertha Stuessy. Mrs. Paul Grossenbacher was chairman of the entertainment.

(New Glarus Post, December 12, 1951)

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.

Ancestry Corner

Photo shared by Tina Kneubuehl Burr, great-granddaughter of Crescencia "Grace" Haegele Kneubuehl.

From left to right, Amalia "Molly" Haegele Luchsinger, Katharina "Kathryn" Haegele Marty, and Crescencia "Grace" Haegele Kneubuehl.

On January 4, 1874, Barbara Duerst Haegele, wife of local blacksmith Constantin Haegele, gave birth to triplet daughters! Amazingly, even the smallest of the girls was over six pounds at birth. In an era when nearly 30% of U.S. children did not live to see their fifth birthday, the fact that these triplets were not only born healthy, but went on to thrive, was a minor miracle!

Molly married Nicholaus Luchsinger, and sadly died in 1900, at the young age of 26.

Kathryn married Joseph Marty and died in 1954 at the age of 80.

Grace married Christian Kneubuehl and died in 1959 at the age of 85.

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Recipient Name
Mailing Address
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