

fall 2014

newsletter



of Bluffton & Pandora
PO Box 5
Bluffton, Ohio 45817

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Annual Household - \$30

Annual Sustaining - \$100

Life - \$1,000

Please check date on mailing label showing current standing. Mail dues checks and donations to Marvin Diller at above address.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Wendy Chappell-Dick

Keeping busy: your Society at work

- Since spring docents have led thirteen private tours of the Schumacher Homestead, among them several international visitors, as well as entire Sunday School classes. In a monumental feat of interpretation, docents showed the house and farm to all four first grade classes of Bluffton Elementary School. Society members also offered a program at the Bluffton Public Library.
- "Vie geist! Dasz ish zum eina anderes Fogel singen." The public of Swiss descent or otherwise was invited to come speak the Swiss dialect on November 4 at Maple Crest, Bluffton. Participants practiced what they could remember of the *Schwyzerdutsch*. The only agenda was to speak Swiss.
- At the Bluffton Area Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting on November 14, Chuck Niswander and Julie Stratton presented, to a packed house, basic information about the future plans and vision for SCHS, including plans for expansion at the Schumacher Homestead site. They described the restoration of the bank barn and also the building of the Heritage Center. The Heritage center will be designed with a community room, children's museum area, archives, exhibit space and kitchen. The goal of the building is to help preserve the past history of the Bluffton/Pandora area while being a teaching and hands-on exploring center for future generations.
- The Board agreed to a proposal from aspiring Eagle Scout Clay Burkholder to construct a "3-holer" outside the Homestead garden. The privy is to be in keeping with the Society's high standards of historical fidelity, except for the pit part ☺.
- Thanks to Chuck Niswander, who along with helpers engineered the Fall Festival's cheese fundraiser by purchasing, smoking, and packaging the cheese.

Swiss Day

Alphorn Gruezie, a Columbus-based group, performed at the Society's annual Swiss Day, June 29, 2014 at Ebenezer Mennonite Church. For a video of the unique and amazing sound of alpine horns, check out and "like" the Swiss Community Historical Society's Facebook page. The name Alphorn Gruezie means Alphorn Greetings in Swiss German. The inspiration for the name was taken from the folk song "Gruezie Miteinander" or "Greetings All Around," a regular in their repertoire. A prayer was given in Swiss and English by Ted Cunningham and Wendy Chappell-Dick, and the Swiss National Anthem was sung in German and in English.



Photo by Alice Chumbley-Lora

Acquisitions

Large copper apple butter kettle with iron stand and wooden paddle. All original. Paddle was repaired when making apple butter at a nursing home facility function around 2010 by the descendants of the Bixel/Basinger family. Paul Basinger donated this as a representative of the Bixel/Basinger family. Paul is the son of Weldon Basinger (1910-1978) and Velma Burkholder Basinger (1918-2008). The kettle/stand/paddle belonged to Weldon's parents Daniel Jacob (D.J.) Basinger (1869-1952) and Elizabeth Bixel Basinger (1877-1958). Previously belonged to Elizabeth's parents Peter Bixel (1832-1908) and Verena Fannie Suter Bixel (1834-1914).



Handmade child's crossbow. This toy once belonged to Walter Renner (1894-1952), son of Lona Amstutz Renner Triplett (1871-1971), sister to Wilhelm Amstutz (1884-1970), wife of Bluffton photographer Will Triplett (1861-1934), daughter of John Amstutz, Jr. (1846-1914) and granddaughter of John "Wagonmaker" or "Waggoner Stutz" Amstutz (1811-1892). Purchased at the Wilhelm Amstutz Estate Sale in 1971. Crossbow is made of wood and needs some repair. Malinda Cearbauch Bennett, the donor, was grand niece of Wilhelm Amstutz (1884-1970) and granddaughter of Malinda Amstutz (1887-1942), great granddaughter to John Amstutz, Jr. (1846-1914) and 2nd great granddaughter to John Amstutz, Sr. (1811-1892).



Docents Trained

The Society welcomes **Jo Pannabecker**, **Rachael Hermiller**, **Bobbie Chappell**, and **Wendy Chappell-Dick** to our growing list of docents. The interpretation Committee, led by Joanne Niswander and including Mary Anne Moser, Rachel Hilty Friesen and Jan Emmert conducts the training. We continue to research what the original settlers might have worn to help with costuming. Bob Suter has made a series of videos to be used for training and archival purposes, which show members of the Society demonstrating all aspects of the collection and property.



Fall Festival 2014

1,350 visitors came to the Schumacher Homestead!

Thanks to our sponsors:

- Shirley's Popcorn sponsored the children's area
- Pandora Grain and Supply sponsored wagon rides and horse-drawn plowing
- Riley Creek Mercantile sponsored the farm animals
- McDonald's sponsored our "Live in the Past" children's activity
- Et Cetera Shop provided costumes and props
- Suter's Produce donated cider
- Vetter Lumber donated boards for our straw bale maze



Photos: Mark Yoder, Julie Stratton





Join us for an Open House:

“Christmas at the Homestead”

**Saturday, December 13, 2014, 1-6 pm
Schumacher Homestead, 8350 Bixel Road**

Come tour the decorated 1843 house while snacking on homemade treats and listening to songs of the season. Watch bread emerge steaming from the fireplace oven, hand dip a candle, play a game of checkers, shop in the gift shop and chat with docents about the history of the house and life in the 1840's. Arrive at dusk to see the house lit by candles much as it was in those days. Instrumental music will include the Bluffton Strings Program, hammer and lap dulcimer players, psaltery, and autoharp. Families and soloists will be singing carols. This event is free to the public, but donations will be gratefully accepted. At 1:00 on this day, all are invited to practice some singing for the next event:

New Year's Eve Serenading, a local musical tradition dating to the mid-19th century, when David Rothen, a teacher in the Swiss settlement of rural Bluffton/Pandora, composed two New Year's songs, taught them to his students, and took these students to sing at the homes of their families on New Year's Day. Over the years, New Year's Eve caroling has been done by both UCC and Mennonite church members. Among the Mennonites, Ebenezer Church had a long-standing tradition of young people caroling all night and receiving treats at church members' houses. Judy Kingsley remembers, "When I was a child we got to go to our grandparents' house on New Year's Eve and either stay up late or wake up when the carolers came. Then we went downstairs in our PJs and served cookies!" The tradition is kept alive in the halls of Mennonite Memorial Home each New Year's Eve. All are welcome, and music is provided. Contact Richard Jordan (419-358-2691) or Judy Kingsley (419-236-5678).