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Fred Gillespie

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New President's Report

by Fred Gillespie

Dear Members of the Swiss American Historical Society,

This is my second stint as president of the SAHS. During my first term, I was asked how I became president. I facetiously replied they couldn't find anybody who wanted the job. I believe my performance while hardly perfect was acceptable since I am back. I hope not to repeat my mistakes.

I want to bring the membership up-to-date with recent developments. First, I want to thank two officers who have performed more than yeoman duty: Albert Winkler and Ernie Thurston.

Albert has served as president and as editor of our *Review*. The president's responsibilities are a veritable sinecure in comparison to the editor's—my most strenuous task is to stuff envelopes once a year. The editor does the real work. Albert's most stressful concern was finding someone to fulfill the treasurer's responsibilities. Thank goodness Ernie stepped in while maintaining his role as membership chairman. In a volunteer organization such as ours, it is grossly unfair for anyone to have too much responsibility. We still need a different full-time treasurer. Any volunteers?

During my first stint as president, I benefited by the guidance and wisdom of four long-time officers who are no longer with us: Dr. Leo Schelbert, Dr. Heinz Bachmann, Dr. Dwight Page, and Rosa Schupbach. Now the Society is blessed with new energetic officers: Thomas Marabello, Brian Wages, Professor Rob Sherwood, and Dr. Richard Hacken.

The Swiss can be slow to accept new ideas. Albert Einstein reputedly once said that in the event of a nuclear war, he would move to Switzerland because the effects would not be felt for at least ten years. In my own family there was a Rolls-Royce before there was a washing machine. My grandmother still did the laundry in the bathtub. But our website is now moving into the 21st century. Members will be able to pay their annual dues online. People will also be able to join our society there. Past issues of our *Review* have been digitized and can be read

there. The society has decided to conduct quarterly Zoom meetings to facilitate business.

Our next annual general meeting will be held on October 14, 2023, in New Glarus, Wisconsin, at the Swiss Center of North America. Beth Zurbuchen, its director, invited us to hold our AGM (annual general meeting) there. I hope many members will attend to take advantage of its relative proximity for them. Details will be announced later.

Dr. Donald Tritt has made a substantial contribution to our society and the executive board has decided to establish an endowment fund in his name. I hope others will be encouraged to contribute also.

Respectfully submitted,
Fred Gillespie
President Swiss American Historical Society

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