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Autor: Winzap, Michael / Wehrle, Heidi

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Editor's Annual Report

Dear Readers,

It is time for me to farewell you all and thank you for having me in your home bi-monthly.

I need to apologise to readers on the big mess I made of AGM notification in last issue. Fatigue must be setting it!!! A notice re current position of Swiss Society of NZ meetings can be found on page 3 along with President's annual report. Club News also reflects the changes that Covid 19 has brought to the Clubs.

The rest of team's farewell is also in this magazine and reflections on Covid 19 come from the Ambassador here on this page and also throughout the magazine from team members and advertisers.

A big thank you to all the team and to Peter Deutschle without whom I would not have been able to bring these issues to fruition.

I wish Taranaki all the best and thank all secretaries for their timely presentation of Club News. Au revoir. Heidi

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I met the Ambassador, Micheal Winzap and his wife Marina, in Hamilton in February when the world was soooo different and invited him to present a personal article ... then Covid 19 arrived. I am sure Taranaki will continue to connect with Michael and extend the invitation again when things are more settled. I have presented his letter with his permission here. ED

Dear Heidi,

Thank you very much for informing (and reminding) me about the Articles for the June-July "Helvetia" and so sorry for my late reply.

The last weeks and months have been very busy for everybody at the Embassy and also for our Consulate in Auckland. We had to repatriate / and facilitate the repatriation of some 1'100 Swiss tourists (and foreigners working and living in Switzerland). It was an amazing task for the small staff of 7 persons at the Embassy.

A lot of other work could not be done because of our duties with the tourists and these days I am responding/deleting/archiving some 3'400 e-mails that arrived during the time when we were busy organizing the departure of so many citizens stranded all over New Zealand.

Especially for hundreds of tourists stranded in the South Island it was quite challenging to leave New Zealand - the main international airport being in Auckland - and having difficulties to move as we were then under Level 4 conditions - no ferries in action and the domestic flights in short supply. Really unbelievable moments we witnessed from the middle of March until end of April.

Therefore, I was and still am unable to respond to your request for the two articles. However, I do keep "the obligation" in mind and will write the articles with great pleasure once I am up to date with the current workload.

All the best and stay safe, Michael

Michael Winzap, Ambassador
Embassy of Switzerland to New Zealand,
the Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu

This is my final editor's report as Hamilton Swiss Club's tenure of the Helvetia comes to an end.

I would like to extend my thanks to the fantastic team that helped me to achieve this milestone. My job was to gather articles attach sources to them and photos and inform secretaries of Clubs, Embassy, OSA when their contributions were needed and then pop them into the dropbox for graphics master Peter Deutschle to put together for me to organise proofreading and approve final draft. Then the behind the scenes things pertaining to Helvetia's final mailing and accounts were carried out by Secretary Anita Zuber and Treasurer Sandrine Smith.

Some doubled up on duties: The President Hans Vetsch and Secretary Anita Zuber were the ones who would reign me in when I needed it – and I did need it on a couple of occasions.

Photographer Kathy Sanders supplied some great shots from celebrations held throughout the years.

The proof-readers Anita Zuber, Heidi Fransen, Rae Achermann, Doris Rust and Belinda Cooper were always very obliging when given only a few days to proof-read before I finalised things with Peter Deutschle. Even then I managed to get it wrong a couple of times.

Sometimes life got in the way for some of the team and others would step in to help cover the breach. All were instrumental in providing articles and suggestions for articles. I am grateful for the team spirit that prevailed throughout the 4 years.

As far as the Helvetia goes, I am extremely proud of all the contributions made by the readers who shared their life stories and experiences. It was my intention to have something about or from a member in every issue. Some thought they were not old enough and I had to remind them of their age. It gave me great pleasure to publish 2 young people's stories of their time in Switzerland.

Some of my more challenging moments over the four years were when I, President Hans and Secretary Anita were all overseas in different places while final articles presentations and publication loomed. Fingers crossed and faith put into our knowledge of technology available we managed to bring all factions i.e. magazine articles, advertising, printing, and mailing together without too much interruption to our respective holidays.

My PC was out of action for one publication, thankfully I had many of the articles in the dropbox but to finalise things emails flew back and forth like confetti in the wind. Once again members of the team stepped in to make it happen.

I learnt a lot re technology, team work, need to think on one's feet and about Switzerland in general as I prepared each issue. Many of the places, that we published an article about, I visited in 2019.

At the time of writing this article NZ was 2 weeks into a 4-week coronavirus lockdown where printers were not deemed an essential service and the team had to look at electronic systems. As only 10% were on electronic version we faced the onerous task of trying to collect many emails at a time when people were otherwise occupied. The outcome of this situation: was lockdown lifted in time? did we need to find other avenues? etc you will know when you receive your June-July issue.

I now gladly hand on the reins and look forward to no longer having to think 2-4 months ahead. Taranaki Team I know you will put your own stamp on our next Helvetias, just like the Hamilton Team did and I wish you all the best.

Heidi Wehrle Editor, 2016-2020