

# Echo

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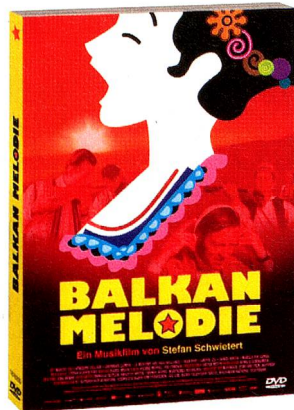
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## Little gems

### On the trail of the Celliers

The Swiss couple Marcel and Catherine Cellier spent 50 years collecting music from Eastern Europe and bringing it to the West during the Cold War (also see issue 4/2012 of "Swiss Review"). A film exploring the world discovered by the couple is now available. The documentary entitled "Balkan Melodie" by director Stefan Schwietert



follows in the footsteps of the Celliers and features interviews with the protagonists of the day, such as the singers of the seemingly archaic "Les Mystères des Voix Bulgares". The film is a sensory piece of contemporary history thanks in no small measure to the historical footage. The sequences captured by Catherine Cellier on her Super-8 camera take you back to a

time when Eastern Europe seemed unreachable distant and grey to people in the West. But it was full of music even then.

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"Balkan Melodie", DVD, 2012. Languages: original version in French, Bulgarian, Rumanian, subtitles: French, German, English, Bulgarian. Available from [www.artfilm.ch](http://www.artfilm.ch). CHF 30

### A reading book to indulge in

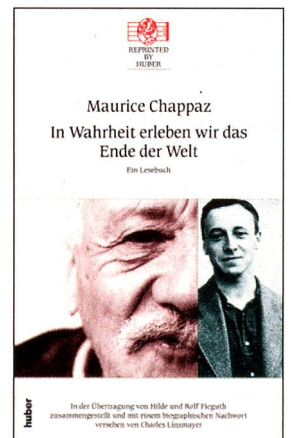
"Un homme qui vivait couché sur un banc" (A man who lived lying on a bench) is the title of Maurice Chappaz's tale published in 1939. This short text marked the beginning of his life as an author. The man on the bench "had fled the community in which his father held a position of authority as a kind of notary or sheriff. He had resolved no longer to agonise over the absurd tasks that everyone in his family and society wanted to impose on him". Chappaz is describing his own situation here. He made the right decision to dedicate himself stubbornly to writing rather than the notary's office. Chappaz was born in 1916 and had left a comprehensive body of work behind upon his death in 2009. A representative selection of his works has now been published in German for the first time. This collection is entitled "In



Wahrheit erleben wir das Ende der Welt". Its editor, Charles Linsmayer, who also contributes a comprehensive biographical epilogue, calls it a "reading book".

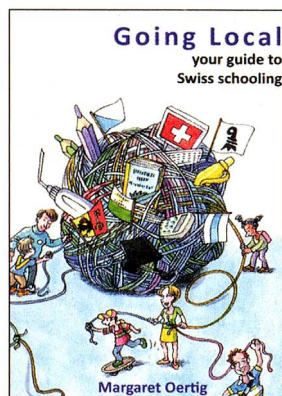
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"In Wahrheit erleben wir das Ende der Welt", translated by Hilde and Rolf Fieguth; ed. Charles Linsmayer; Huber Verlag, Frauenfeld, 352 pages; around CHF 40

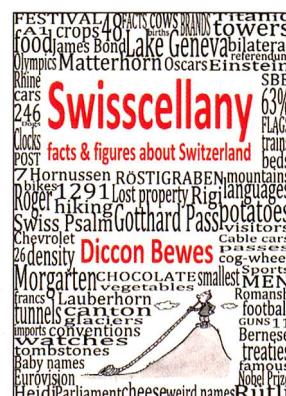


### What makes the Swiss tick?

Which place in Switzerland is furthest from the national borders? What is Switzerland called in Ireland? Which is the oldest brand of Swiss watch? Which canton has the most cars per inhabitant? Here are the answers: Uttigen in the canton of Berne. An Eilvéis. Blancpain. Appenzell Innerrhoden with 949 cars per 1,000 inhabitants. All of these and many more amusing and informative facts can be found in Diccon Bewes' book "Swisscellany - facts & figures about Switzerland", recently published by "Bergli Books", a



small publishing house in Basel. "Bergli Books" was founded over 20 years ago by Dianne Dicks to facilitate interaction with the Swiss or "ticking along



with the Swiss", as Dianne Dicks puts it. Since then, she has regularly published books that are extremely useful in dealings with Switzerland and Swiss peo-

ple. "Going Local", for example, is a guide to the Swiss education system, which is very useful and not just for foreigners living in Switzerland. The publishing house's portfolio also includes several language guides: "Hoi zämme - your Swiss German survival guide" and "Sali zämme", an essential read for coping in Switzerland with over 2,000 expressions in the Basel dialect.

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Contact: Bergli Books AG, Falknerstrasse 12, 4001 Basel, Switzerland, Tel. + 41 61 373 27 78, [www.bergli.ch](http://www.bergli.ch)

## Bulletins

### Swiss returns to Geneva

Geneva airport is set to become an operating base again for the airline Swiss 16 years after Swissair decided to focus its activities on Zurich. This decision sparked widespread protests in French-speaking Switzerland at the time. Swiss has announced that flights from Geneva will now be increased gradually. Staff numbers are expected to rise from 81 at present to 320 by the end of 2014. However, the only direct intercontinental flight out of Geneva for the time being will be to New York (JFK).

### Federal Council opts for Gripen jets

Despite widespread criticism of the Swedish Gripen aircraft, the Federal Council has given the go-ahead for the purchase of 22 of these fighter jets for the Swiss armed forces at a cost of CHF 3.1 billion. The deal still needs to be approved by the Federal Assembly over the coming months. A referendum after that is highly likely. Various organisations have announced that they plan to call a referendum.

### Award for Swissinfo

The Geneva office of Swissinfo, an Internet platform (<http://swissinfo.ch>) that is very popular with the Swiss abroad, has received the "Nicolas Bouvier Special Prize" for the quality and originality of its editorial coverage of the international scene in Geneva. The four journalists based in Geneva provide regular reports on international organisations, negotiations and agreements in Japanese, English, Arabic and French. The Prix Bouvier was awarded for the third time this year in memory of the travel writer and photographer Nicolas Bouvier, who passed away in 1998.

### Switzerland takes over ESA presidency

Switzerland is taking over the presidency of the European Space Agency (ESA) together with Luxembourg. This is a "huge opportunity", says Urs Frei of the State Secretariat for Education and Research. Around a dozen Swiss companies with 800 employees work almost exclusively for the aerospace industry. Switzerland contributes around CHF 150 million to ESA's budget of CHF 4.5 billion.

### Literature prizes awarded by federal government

The Federal Office of Culture awarded literature prizes for the first time in 2012. Eight authors received awards. These were Irena Brežná, for her novel "Die undankbare Fremde" (The Thankless Stranger), which featured in the August 2012 issue of "Swiss Review", as well as Arno Camenisch, Massimo Daviddi, Thilo Krause, Daniel Popescu, Catherine Safonoff, Frédéric Wandelère and Matthias Zschokke. The prize winners each receive a sum of CHF 25,000 as well as support through specific promotional measures.

### Opposed to immigration initiative

On 7 December 2012, the Federal Council announced its rejection of the "initiative against mass immigration" submitted by the Swiss People's Party (SVP) in February 2012. The reason it gave was that acceptance of the initiative would have required the termination of the free movement of persons and of all other bilateral agreements with the EU.

## Quotes

*"The people do not want an ostentatious and glamorous President – that suits me fine."*

Ueli Maurer, President of Switzerland in 2013 prior to his election

*"I get along very well with Ueli Maurer and I respect his ideas. Admittedly, we do not always have the same ones..."*

Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter

*"Those who are not politically active are essentially helping people who want the opposite of what they themselves consider important and right."*

Federal Councillor Alain Berset

*"I like being boring. You have to be boring as part of an executive."*

Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf in an interview with the "Zeit" newspaper

*"Democracy is worth as much as those who speak in its name."*

Robert Schuman (1886–1963), French politician and first President of the European Parliament (1958–60)

*"Irony is the last stage of disappointment."*

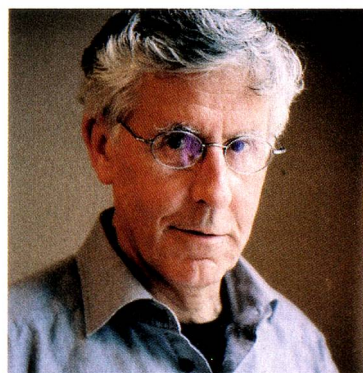
Anatole France, French author and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature (1844–1924)

*"In Switzerland, we know exactly how many three-legged cows there are but not how many people live here in poverty."*

Hugo Fasel, former National Councillor and Director of Caritas on statistics in Switzerland

*"I believe in God, but am very poor at practising my faith."*

Didier Défago, Swiss ski racer after being asked whether he prays before the start of a dangerous race



Peter von Matt won this year's Swiss Book Prize for his book "Das Kalb vor der Gotthardpost" (The Calf in front of the Gotthard Post). The 75-year-old professor emeritus of German studies is "Switzerland's most important living author", Marcel Reich-Ranicki, the leading German expert on literature, said years ago. Von Matt himself is less enthusiastic about this statement: "I detest that phrase", he said in an interview. He considers the assertion to be wrong as there is no clear scale for judging this. The jury's appraisal of von Matt's work at the award ceremony: "It is a book that relates outstandingly well to present-day Switzerland. Peter von Matt highlights the relationship between literature and politics through analyses of great linguistic power and originality of thought." (The book featured in the "Books" section of the August 2012 issue of "Swiss Review".)