

# News from Switzerland

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## NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY



The shooting competition of the Swiss Society will take place on Saturday and Sunday, the 9th and 10th of March, 1963.

The Presidents of the Clubs will receive shortly all necessary information.

As this annual event of our Society proved very successful in past years we hope that this coming competition will find the same keen interest among our compatriots.

Please contact your Club President to get the Groups together and all further information.

HANS OETTLI,

Riflemaster

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## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND



### In a Few Lines

Ice-skating fans will always find an ice-rink within their reach in Switzerland, for there are now 48 artificial ice-rinks here, totalling a surface of over one million square feet, which makes Switzerland the world's No. 1 ice-skating nation.

After the excellent experiences made with an ambulant dental clinic in Switzerland's mountainous Canton Valais, the low-land Canton of Geneva will soon purchase a similar mobile dentist's unit for the benefit of its school children.

The Swiss deep-water diver, Hannes Keller, has completed successful experiments with a newly developed diving device in the lake of Constance. He is said to have improved his own records and will soon try to reach a depth of 1000 ft. from California's Pacific coast. The new device permits quick emerging from great depths; its chamber can be left by the diver for underwater research.

Zurich's popular Sunday excursion goal, the 3600 ft. high Etzel, will continue to belong to the "foot soldier," it was learnt with relief in hiking circles. Plans to build an aerial tramway and a motorway up to the summit of this mountain, which commands a unique panoramic view reaching from the Black Forest to the Alps, were wrecked by the owners of the summit restaurant who refused to sell the place to the interested company and let the Swiss Alpine Club buy it for a song. The SAC will see to it that the Etzel range remains a wanderer's paradise.

## **The Astronaut of Swiss Origin**

The inhabitants of the Ticinese village of Loco in the Onsernone Valley sent a telegram to the astronaut Walter Shirra on board the capsule "Sigma 7." The text went as follows: "Loco and the Ticino rejoice in the wonderful achievement of their co-citizen and wish him every success. Best wishes, Walter!"

It was made known some time ago that Schirra was indeed of Swiss origin. His family appeared in the Onsernone Valley about 1500. It is likely that they came from Malta. In 1868 four brothers Schirra emigrated to America, three to California and one to Puerto Rico. Walter Schirra's grandfather married a girl from Schwyz, in America, called Schindler. The family in Loco spell their name with one "r" only.

## **Important Archaeological Gold Treasure Found in the St. Gotthard Region**

Beautifully hand-carved neck and wrist rings in pure gold featuring intricate relief images of semi-animal heads are now on exhibit at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich. These masterpieces of Celtic goldsmiths dating back some 2,300 years had been found at Erstfeld, a town on the St. Gotthard rail line in Switzerland's Canton Uri—only 10 minutes' travelling time from the lake of Lucerne—and are described as Europe's most precious archaeological discovery in the last three decades. It is believed that a merchant using the ancient North-South Alpine mule trail either lost or buried the treasure here. Two Italian construction workers, who received a rich finder's reward, had unearthed it from a depth of thirty feet while operating a dredger on the site of a barrage which is being built at Erstfeld to protect the Reuss valley against the threat of the avalanches from the steep mountainside. The treasure—the most important of its kind found in Switzerland since 1906—consists of four neck-rings and three bracelets, all unused, which may indicate that the Celtic merchant fell victim to one of the prehistoric earthslides or avalanches.

## **Fifty Years in the Service of Youth**

The Swiss "Pro Juventute" Foundation, which has undertaken and sponsored numerous works in favour of youth, was founded in Switzerland as long ago as 1912. Every year, at the beginning of December, Pro Juventute, in collaboration with the Swiss Post Office, issues a new set of highly artistic postage stamps, with a slight surcharge, the proceeds of which go towards financing certain charities for the youth of the country. This year's set of Pro Juventute stamps consists once again of five different values; while on the 5 cent and 50 cent stamp sprays of blossom commemorate the Foundation's jubilee, the three other stamps illustrate its charitable activities in favour of the youth of Switzerland. These stamps will



be valid for all letters and postal packets both at home and abroad, from December 1st, 1962, to June 30th, 1963. The proceeds from the surcharge will be used not only for covering the ordinary financial needs of the foundation, but also for creating a jubilee gift for special needs of the moment. In addition, Pro Juventute is once more issuing a special envelope with an ornamental border as well as a book of 32 five and ten cent stamps (postal value) in a gilt cover, sold for the price of S.Fr. 5. -(U.S. dollars equals 1.16). All these stamps are printed on a rotary photogravure press by Courvoister Ltd. of La Chaux-de-Fonds. Finally, let us mention that in its first half century, the Pro Juventute Foundation has devoted some 140 million Swiss francs (U.S. dollars equals 32.5 million) to charitable work in favour of Swiss youth. (OSEC)

### **Cultural Events in Switzerland—January, 1963**

Three strange figures which will haunt **Rasel** on January 12th, the "Griffin Bird," the "Lion," and the "Wild Man," bear evidence of the survival of old Swiss folk customs. The "Grand Theatre" in **Geneva**, scheduled to reopen in December in new glamour, will not be a repertory theatre in the Swiss tradition but resort to short, festive series of guest performances. In January productions of operas by Richard Wagner and Claude Debussy will be shown in between a Moliere play to be performed by the Comedie Francaise of Paris, Ballets, theatrical groups and orchestras from Vienna, Copenhagen, Stuttgart, New York, Lisbon and London are to guest perform at several Swiss cities. The Museum of Ethnology in **Basel** announces a series of exhibitions under the motto "Man and Handicraft"; the Zoological Museum of the University of **Zurich**, in a special show, calls the attention to "Extinct and Endangered Animals." At **Berne**, **Basel** and **Schaffhausen** the local art shows will be held over into January; **Geneva** renders homage to Hodler, **Lausanne** to Henry Bischoff and the **St. Gall** Abbey Library exhibits documents relating to the history of the buildings and books of the Monastery. **Grindelwald** opens the 75th anniversary of its winter season with a "Culinary Fortnight."

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### **Laugh a little . . .**

An old-fashioned schoolmaster had died. He had taught not only his knowledge but also by the strength of his arms and hands. At his funeral it was said: "A fatherly heart and two untiring arms have stopped beating."

The guest at a cocktail party: "Heavens, how boring it is here. I think I shall sneak away."

The chap next to the guest: "I'd love to do that too, but unfortunately I am the host."

—NEBELSPALTER