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EDITORIAL

On the occasion of this tenth issue of the **New Look HELVETIA** magazine, it is maybe time to pause and reflect a bit on what has been achieved over the past ten months.

The aim of the **New Look HELVETIA** was to provide all Swiss in New Zealand with a monthly magazine that is of interest to everyone. By producing it on a monthly basis at the beginning of each month, it gave all Swiss Clubs in New Zealand the opportunity of using it as a vehicle for their own Club News. No longer is it necessary for the Clubs to produce their own newsletters. All they have to do is to send in their

news items by the 15th of each month in order to have their Club news in the hands of their own Members a fortnight or so later. No need to scrape together sufficient items to fill a whole newsletter, no more costs for paper, envelopes or wrappers and stamps. The new **HELVETIA** has allowed the individual Clubs to do away with all this work and these expenses.

Furthermore, by publishing club news from all Clubs in New Zealand and sending them to all subscribers throughout the country, everyone can now be up to date with what activities are going on in each Club. Lettres from readers, whatever Club they belong to, can now be read by all

Swiss in New Zealand. The Swiss Embassy has found it useful too to use the **HELVETIA** to pass on to all readers news items of general interest to all Swiss in New Zealand.

So the **HELVETIA** has become the true source of information for all Swiss in New Zealand who want to keep in touch with what is going on in Switzerland as well as with the activities of each individual Club.

From the reaction we have had so far, it seems that everyone agrees that the **HELVETIA** magazine is on the right track and that it fulfills a real purpose and a need within the Swiss community of New Zealand.

But time has come too to reflect on the matter of costs. In these times of "user pays", the present subscription rate of \$10.00 per year for 12 issues is totally inadequate. More than 50% of these \$10.00 are spent on postage alone. Postage costs remain the same, whether you dispatch a single sheet newsletter or a 12 page magazine. To print the **HELVETIA** on cheaper paper and in one colour only would reduce its appeal quite dramatically with only minimal savings on costs (around 10 cts a copy).

To save on the editing side is not possible either, since your Editor does all the work on a benevolent basis. Although he spends 30-40 hours a month in selecting, writing, proof-reading and typing the articles into a computer and finally in making up the total lay-out of the magazine, he also spends his own money on petrol, faxes, telephone calls, envelopes and stamps. Your Editor also pays for his own advertisements in the magazine like every other advertiser and he even pays his own annual subscription (It occurred to the Editor that he may well be the only Editor in the world who has to pay for the privilege of being allowed to read the magazine he produced himself!!!).

Since savings on the production and the dispatch of the **HELVETIA** magazine are not possible, the solutions to the problem can be summed up as follows:

1) Adjust the subscription rate to a more realistic level in line with today's real costs for such a magazine.

2) Reduce the magazine back to what it was before in which case your Editor will no longer be required.

3) Do away totally with the magazine and leave it again to each Club to produce its own newsletter.

Most ethnic societies in New Zealand have their own magazine or newspaper. It would of course be a shame if the Swiss Society which, compared to other ethnic societies, is certainly not the poorest, would loose its own publication. But all Members have to realise that in this day and age, you cannot get something for nothing. The increase in subscription suggested by your Swiss Society Committee is a realistic one. Spread over 12 issues per year, delivered to your own home, the cost per issue is certainly in line with many other similar publications.

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