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Editorial, - an Introduction

Some 12 months ago I agreed to the request from the president of the Hamilton Swiss Club that my name should go forward as the future editor of our Society publication HELVETIA.

With the election as part of the AGM on June 1., confirming my appointment, my term of duty has arrived.

Your past Editor, Henry Sigerist, deserves a public word of thanks from me for the introduction to the task ahead on a more technical level. A Public word of thanks also to the willing friends which have offered their help on the "Editing Team" for the HELVETIA. They are all respected members of the Hamilton Swiss Club; Joe Staheli, Charlie and Ruth Waldvogel, Bert and Josy Flühler, Heinz Leuenberger, Uli Elmiger, Doris Rust and Trudy Wilson.

- As a team of willing "helpers to the cause" we are part of the Society Committee and are as such assured of the cooperation needed from your Society's new President, Beatrice Leuenberger.

- The production of such a modern and appealing HELVETIA as you have enjoyed for the past few years will be a challenge to us all.

A short introduction to myself takes us back to 1935, the year of my birth in upper Toggenburg, Switzerland. A precarious but very happy youth as child number four in a wholesome family of solid parents and grandparent had built-in benefits of a lasting nature. Growing up in a rural small-farming-setting of natural beauty with Christian ethical foundation, good solid primary and secondary schooling, the support given and received to and from family, friends and neighbours during years of austerity and happiness paralleled with a strong sense of responsibility,

the camaraderie in gymnastic-, shooting- and singing clubs, a successfully concluded apprenticeship in a community office of administration and finally military training (Rekrutenschule). 1956 was the year of emigration for myself with my Parents to join two of my Brothers already in New Zealand. (An older Brother with family and Sister followed later)

New Zealand, Aotearoa, new country of choice, new challenges, new friends, new language, new mentality, new workexperiences, embarking on dairy farming life lasting against all expectations for close to 40 years! Healthy homesickness during the early years shared with many new friends and Swiss compatriots the acquaintance of wonderful Kiwi farming employers saw my love for the "old country" grow as well as the love for the "new and generous country of our choice". A memorable occasion to have been associated with the Hamilton Swiss Club as a founding member! Marriage to Margrit (Gritli), my Wife in 1960 and the growth of a family of one son and three daughters. Dual citizenship, the many years of happiness shared with Swiss- and Kiwi friends, family life on the land near Hamilton and Te Awamutu has brought my Wife and myself to semi-retirement at Te Pahu in the shadow of mount Pirongia, living on a life style block in a rural setting as part of our son's family farm.

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PRESIDENTS REPORT, JUNE 1997

A month has now passed since our 1997 AGM, and the "handover" of the Society's affair to the Hamilton Club.

- Did we know what we were getting ourselves into??

Well, I think yes, more or less!!

Most certainly, we have been kept very busy in our various new roles, the main task being that the HELVETIA is put together on time to reach all your mail boxes in early July.

Possibly, a few of us will have some sleepless nights, at least until we see the end product, but then again, I'm sure we'll all be very happy with the results. The great efforts and abilities of our Editor, Rinaldo Rust, together with his team of helpers, will ensure this.

- Both Rinaldo and I have had a "wonderful" time getting to grips with our new, fail-safe (or was that fool safe?!) computer equipment and printers. My job was to do the address labels on my brand new printer, only to find out that with my model, the ink would smudge if it rained and the mail got wet! But problem solved - I've now got two printers, one solely for labels. In five years, I may even consider selling it to the Taranaki Club.....

(And if there are any errors in your name or address, please let me know so that it can immediately be corrected. Everything has been reloaded onto a new database, so there could be a few typing errors, which I can only correct if you let me know about them.)

- So all told, we're coping well with all the little "hiccups" which inevitably arise when settling into new jobs. Of course, we welcome any constructive comments or ideas, both good or otherwise.

- I would like to personally thank everyone who came to our well attended, recent AGM; it was encouraging to see all Clubs represented. My thanks also to the Hamilton Club for their hard work involved in successfully organizing the weekend's events and entertainment, which I'm sure everyone enjoyed.

- Since the meeting, I have been informed that several people were unable to hear me, and others, speak, for which I apologise, although it's a shame no one said anything at the time. But, for those who may be interested (?), and for the benefit of those not present, I have attached a copy of my address at the end of this report.

- Taranaki Club came up with the good suggestion that a microphone should be used, so, since they're hosting next years AGM, I'm sure they'll be providing one and everyone speaking will be well heard - yet another problem solved!

The next big event on the Swiss Calendar is of course the First August, and I would like to wish you all an enjoyable National Day and fun celebration within your respective Clubs, or just with friends. Please also generously support the purchase of the annual Abzeichen, as these funds always go towards a worthwhile Swiss cause.

Thank you and take care. With

best wishes and kind regards,

Beatrice Leuenberger

ADDRESS TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1 JUNE 1997

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words at this meeting today.

Firstly I would like to thank the Hamilton Club for my nomination as President (although this morning I was beginning to wonder what I was getting myself into!), but I thank everyone here today for your endorsement.

- In return, I will endeavour to do my best for the good of the Swiss Society and as a representative of Swiss living in New Zealand.

- Five years can be a long time, and I would like to congratulate and commend the outgoing 'Auckland' Society Committee for their running of the Society since 1992. My own personal thanks go especially to Werner Stebler and Edi Brändli for the excellent standard of documentation that has been handed over to our new committee. Special thanks must also go to Henry Sigerist as Editor, and Peter Schüpbach as Printer, of that now famous magazine in the Swiss Community, the Helvetia. Many voluntary hours and costs, often

unseen, and unrealised, go into such tasks as these, and I hope I speak for everyone here present, and all other Society members, in saying that the hard work of these people over the past years is very much appreciated.

- When I think back over the past two years or so, at Club meetings and gatherings, we were often reminding ourselves and each other that it would be Hamilton's 'turn' next!! We must start thinking about forming a Society Committee and be prepared. To a lot of people though, the words, "new committee" do not inspire a great deal of enthusiasm - but never mind, it all still seemed such a long way off yet and we still had plenty of time. So far, all we needed was a possible President by the 1996 AGM. Many names were suggested, a lot of people were approached, and often a plea was made for a volunteer - but no candidates came forward. Time was running out!

- Then, one Sunday afternoon, in about Spring of 1996, Doris Rust came to visit. Again, the subject of Society President arose, and to my delight, Doris said she knew exactly who could do the job. Wondering who she was meaning, more fool me, I asked, "Who"? Doris' reply - "You"!!!!

My reaction - all I could do was laugh; that thought had not even remotely crossed my mind.

- I did not seek out this position, but then did seriously consider the possibility, and at Hamilton's AGM,



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I stated that, with the Club's endorsement, I would be prepared to take on the job if no one else wanted to do it.

- So now you have me. But, at least I have an ideal scapegoat if I don't do a good job, just blame Doris, afterall, it was all her doing....

- Today though, I must admit, I do feel quite proud to be the first woman President of the Swiss Society. Obviously, Appenzeller must be in the minority here today!

- Besides this, I can actually also claim two more 'firsts'. One is that I am the first New Zealand born President, which I sincerely hope will be seen as a sign that the next generation of Swiss is still keen and interested to be actively involved in the Swiss Community and with Swiss culture. I certainly hope that this is the case, as Switzerland still plays an important and integral part of our heritage, and our lives, even if it is in a different sort of way than that of the original immigrants.

- The other first to which I must unfortunately also lay claim to is that of being disabled. This, in itself, is actually of no importance to me, but I feel compelled to raise the subject for only one particular reason. It has been brought to my attention recently that there are apparently one or two people who seem to feel that, due to my disability, I should not take on the job of President. Personally, I don't see the relevance, but, to be honest, it was quite upsetting to hear, and certainly didn't do much for my self-esteem.

- But please, let me assure you all today, and especially those who have this particular concern, that my brain, quite uninjured from the accident, is still firmly in place in my head, and not down in the big toe of my injured leg!!!

- In any case, should my disability in some way prevent me from performing any particular task or function, I know that I have the support of a very good and capable committee behind me, and I am only one part of the whole team. So, with this said, I hope I have been able to put everyone's concerns to rest.

- Hamilton has an excellent team in place to run the Society's affairs over the next five years, and I know that we will all do our very best to keep things running smoothly. I have every confidence in our new Editor, Rinaldo Rust, and the editing team,

and am sure that future Helvetia magazines will be of a continued high standard. With Bert Flühler as Deputy President and Ruth Waldvogel as Secretary, we have very competent people who will efficiently carry out all tasks.

- But you've heard enough from me now, so apart from wishing everybody an enjoyable stay here in Hamilton, and a safe journey home tomorrow, there is just one more thing.

- Once more, I congratulate the Auckland Committee for their hard work, and have pleasure in moving the motion that the outgoing President, Hans Fitzi, and the outgoing Editor, Henry Sigerist, be made honorary members of the Swiss Society, and I invite Herbert Staheli, President of the Hamilton Swiss Club, to second this motion.

Thank you!

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Art-fair in Basel (Kunstaussstellung)

What's regarded as the world's leading contemporary art-fair has opened in Basel. More than 600 galleries had hoped to exhibit at this year's event. Unfortunately there is only space for half of them. The major artists and art-movements of the twentieth century are represented at this fair. Selecting the galleries which can exhibit is done by a committee whose chairman is the director of the fair. The main criteria is quality. There are 263 exhibitors from Europe, America, Asia and

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Australia. The Basel art-fair is regarded as the most important fair for twentieth century art, according to the spokesman for the Marlborough gallery in London. A mood of optimism in the contemporary art market follows recent auctions in New York where the high bidding was seen as the long awaited sign of revival. At the end of the eighties and especially at the beginning of the nineties there was a big crisis in the art market as there was also a crisis in the worldwide economy. And now the beginning of the economic recovery is the best sign for the art market. One of the sectors getting stronger is photography. It's clear from a visit to the Basel fair that