

# Contributions from our Delegate to the Swiss abroad, Heinz Leuenberger

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closer association between Swissair and the Society. Recently, Darragh sent me four CD's which had been specially compiled for Swissair as part of the 1997 Montreux Jazz Festival. These will probably be used as a prize of some sort in the near future. I would like to thank Swissair, firstly for this gesture, but most especially, for making the effort, as "our airline", to renew a past relationship with the Swiss Society and Community, which had sadly dwindled for such a long time. I hope that we can now build on this new beginning.

With my kindest regards,

Beatrice.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Following some controversy and a complaint from Wellington Swiss Club regarding the letter to the Editor in the December/January issue of Helvetia the Editing Team has decided that letters to the Editor will in future only be accepted for printing using either the writer's name or a chosen nom-de-plume (**no initials**)!

However the original letter must include the writer's full name, address and signature and these details will remain confidential to the Editor.

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## YOUR CORNER .....

Well, Christmas is over once again, and I can honestly say that I'm relieved. Life seems to become so hectic and stressful before Christmas, and thankfully things have slowed down since. And I must say New Year's Eve came and went very quietly for us (Having to get up at 5 a.m. the next morning could have something to do with it!)

However, I have heard that a lot of our Swiss friends celebrated long into New Year playing Jassen and enjoying traditional food and drinks. One of our friends, who happens to be a fellow Hamilton Swiss Club committee member (I daren't mention any names!) even made it on the front page of the Waikato Times Newspaper with his traditional way of celebrating New Year's Eve. Apparently, every year he takes part in a "Burning Butt Championship" where a rolled newspaper is wedged between their "butts", the paper is lit, and you have to take tiny steps towards the finishing line without getting your 'butt' burnt! No doubt if things get a little heated they would have jumped into the nearby ocean to cool off! And I'm pleased to say that our friend has remained the reigning champion. After reading the article and having had a good laugh about it my mind went back to a Swiss Society A.G.M. a couple of years ago where it was discussed that one of the events in the competitions was biased towards 'strong' farmers and it was suggested a different sport be used that would be fairer. I wondered if the 'Burning Butt' Competition would be appropriate!!!

Thanks to the people who have written in saying they enjoy reading Your Corner, and please send in any contributions or ideas to us.

Doris and Trudi.

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## Contributions from our Delegate to the Swiss abroad, Heinz Leuenberger.

### YOUTH CAMPS IN SWITZERLAND

If you have read the latest "Swiss Revue" of 0 6/97 - you will have seen the articles about this year's camps.

There are five in all for the 15 - 25 year olds, starting in April.

The August camp is arranged so that participants can attend the 76. Congress for the Swiss Abroad.

Seven camps for the 7 - 14 year olds will also be held. They take place during July and August. Upon application, the Foundation may reduce the costs by as much as sFr. 200.- do sFr. 750.-. In some cases the Secretariat may help with travel costs.

Applications can be made directly to the Secretariat or to me.

During the meeting with Dr. Wyder at the Secretariat in Berne last October, he intimated that the Directorate is keen to see New Zealand, one of the last countries to take part in the youth camps, if at all possible.

P.S. I'm looking for a person or persons to take on the organizing and co-ordination of all matters concerning Youth Activities. It would suit anyone interested in that type of activity. Please give me a call.

Also contained in the last "Swiss Revue" is the programme for this year's Congress, to be held in both BADEN and LENZBURG.

With 1998 being a year of festivities (150 years of Bundesstaat) the Congress will be of particular interest. If you plan a trip back to the old country, why not go for it!!

You meet so many interesting people from all over the globe. (N'est-pas, Ruedi?)

### SWISSAIR

Most compatriots are probably aware that for the past few years, Swissair, like so many other airlines, have been experiencing the effects of the extreme competition in the field of international transportation. Far-reaching restructuring was necessary, resulting in redundancies and all of the other side-effects that

such measures bring about. This brought the once top of the class airline into disrepute, not least with the Swiss themselves. Here in New Zealand we experienced this grim situation by Swissair no longer being associated with our Society.

Upon seeing their advertising in the program of the Swiss Abroad Congress, I requested some further information and as a result, I was contacted by Swissair through their Auckland agent. With less than three weeks to go before our proposed departure date, we were informed that a special package between Singapore Airlines and Swissair had been put together. The price was still considerably higher than one of the more competitive ones, but it also included an extra free trip to any destination within Swissair's European network.

What made me decide to accept this package? Over the past 25 years we have travelled with many good Airlines flying through Asia, and I haven't found that there is any significant overall difference between them. So I just felt it would be a good idea, and the perfect opportunity, to put Swissair's reputation (such as it was) to the test.

With the added bonus of visiting another European city, I can honestly say, without prejudice, that Swissair is on an equal footing with the others. It shows that no Airline that wants to succeed in this highly competitive industry can possibly afford to be otherwise, and they are to be congratulated.

So now, as a result of the correspondence and renewed contact that has taken place between myself and Swissair over recent times, it is pleasing to see Swissair beginning to reaffirm its association with the Swiss Society.

Heinz Leuenberger  
Delegate for the Swiss Abroad.

#### Wisdom

It is one of life's hardest things to accept ones fellow human beings as they really are, instead of wanting them as one would like them to be!

Friedrich Glauser  
Translated from German

### Survey by Helen Baumer

Over the summer months an MA student at the University of Auckland, Helen Baumer, has been conducting interviews with Swiss to find out what prompted them to come here and how they have adapted to the Kiwi way of life.

Helen Baumer, who lived 17 years in Zurich herself and is Swiss by marriage, wanted to know how much of their Swiss outlook on life and their Swiss custom the immigrants had retained. She was also interested to find out about the Swiss contribution to postwar New Zealand life.

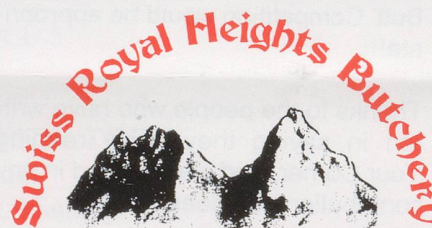
Helen says that in 1944 the number of Swiss registered at the Embassy in Wellington was 316. In October 1997 it was 5236. For a number of reasons, both figures probably underestimate the actual number of Swiss living in New Zealand. Nevertheless the rise in numbers after the Second World War has been dramatic: an increase by a factor of more than sixteen.

She has spoken to 50 individuals or couples from the Auckland, Waikato and Thames/Coromandel areas, representing not only a cross section of the six decades of the post-war period, but also a wide range of professions including academics, business people, farmers, traders, trades people, a musician and even a best-selling author. Although most of the post-war immigrants have been German-speaking, she has also interviewed a small number of French and Italian-speaking Swiss.

The results of the interviews will be analysed for her MA thesis, and a report will appear in a later edition of HELVETIA.

Helen Baumer may be known to some readers of Helvetia as a former editor of the newsletter of the New Zealand club in Switzerland (now edited by Celia Baumann).

She was also the editor of an English-language monthly in Switzerland then called *Swiss Scene* and now called *Swiss News*. She contributed articles to the business monthly *SwissBusiness* and worked later as English translator at the Home Office of Zurich Insurance Group. She returned to New Zealand in June 1995 with her son Tis, and hopes to work as a lecturer after completing her MA in German in mid 1998.



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