

# Your corner...

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border'. Never mind, it will be the cuckoo that remains the fascination and moreover cuckoos are known to fly in all directions and across many a border.

## President's Message

In last month's *Helvetia* I wrote about the high interest the Swiss Government holds regarding its citizens abroad, and the role Swiss Clubs hold within their communities.

In 1995, a Working Committee, titled "Swiss Clubs", was established by the Council for Swiss Abroad. The role of this group was to research the make-up, functions and goals of clubs worldwide, in order to know how best to offer the necessary aid and support required by these organisations, as well as to how to form new clubs where there are currently none.

This was done by sending questionnaires to Swiss Clubs throughout the world, of which just half were returned. Through answers received, it was discovered that this action was long overdue, and concluded that many of the existing Clubs were in need of a variety of levels of guidance and assistance.

The information received was collated and presented in a report on the finding of Swiss clubs worldwide, divided into four categories:

1. Statistics
2. Problems within the Clubs
3. Ideas and Recommendations
4. Clubs into the Future

I have translated and summarised this important document, and will begin this month with the first category.

### 1. Statistics

Overall individual Club membership varies from between 20 - 600, over 75% being Swiss Nationals. Many Clubs are "ageing" - average age is increasing, many Clubs having the majority of members over 60. Most Club Committees are made up of at least half being Swiss citizens, aged along the lines of their Clubs. The average term of service is 1-4 years.

In most places, individual regional clubs are formed. Normally, a small membership fee is collected and then the cost of functions is often low or subsidised for members.

Only a small number of Clubs, mainly those with high membership or a large urban base, own high assets, both wealth and property.

The majority of Clubs organise 5-10 functions annually, and most of the rest offer regular monthly events.

Communication to advertise functions is normally made through official publications or newsletters, by invitation, or by word of mouth. Most Clubs or Swiss organisations produce a variety of regular publications of many sorts. This work is normally done within a relatively small budget.

New members are often found through contact with Embassies or Consulates, but recent restructures and reductions of these diplomatic posts means that Clubs must begin finding new and innovative methods to locate new arrivals to invite them to join their local club.

So - food for thought. Where do we fit within these statistics, both as a Society and as individual Clubs?

Next month - a look at further categories researched, beginning with the Problems clubs face. In the meantime though, I wish an enjoyable March. Regards.....Beatrice  
PS. My thanks to the Auckland Club for the get well card following my recent further surgery. I appreciated your kind thoughts and good wishes.

### SWISS BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Over the past few months, many responses have been received from members for inclusion in our proposed Society business directory.

#### But we still want more !!

So, if you own, run, or work for any business, anywhere throughout New Zealand, providing goods or services, which could then be supported by the Swiss Community or Tourists, then don't miss out - please let us know immediately!

For a small fee, we will advertise basic details of your business in a directory, which can then be used by residents and tourists to locate "Swiss" businesses throughout the country. If enough responses are received, the directory will be prepared within the coming months.

#### To be included, write to:

Directory  
Beatrice Leuenberger  
44 Montgomery Crescent  
Hamilton.  
or fax 07 843 7941.

**Let us know about your business, and then we can tell everyone about you !!**

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## Your Corner.....

We are grateful to Heidi Wehrli of Matamata for her gallant efforts in composing 'a **Society Member's Profile**' on her Father Joseph (Sepp) Arnold of Hamilton.

A very prominent and long-standing member of the Hamilton Swiss Club, Sepp Arnold is of course the husband of Alice and the Father of a great family including Son Peter, 'Oberjodler' of the Swiss Kiwi Jodel Group of Auckland.

Thank you Sepp for allowing us a glimpse back into your life.

Doris and Trudy.

## Joseph Arnold's Journey to his present day

Joseph and Alice Arnold were exploring the possibilities of Dairyfarming in France and America, when Alice's sister, Marie-Louise, visited and became the catalyst for them to move to NZ. What follows are some of the dates and memories that have been part of Joseph's life.

18/12/15 Born into a farming family at Rengg, Alpnachstad, Joseph was to be a member of a family of 16. The farm was nestled under the Pilatus mountain and had the most picturesque views over the Alpnachersee over to the Stanserhorn on the other side.

His young life consisted of work, school and the occasional stolen moment of reading in the haybarn. Reading, playing Swiss cards and Yodelling, (one of which he could do while working !!!,) were to be his hobbies for life.

23/5/38 He purchased some of the farm from his father. Sepp (as he was known) worked the land and can recall making hay on the "Steigli", (a steep piece of land he leased) when the call came from the Swiss Army: "IRUKAH" (Mobilise). For Sepp the war had to wait a few hours as he put his hay into the barn. During the war years he often entertained the troops and the civilians with his yodelling, singing and humorous pranks. On the more serious side was guarding the Jewish refugees of various nationalities which came over the border and were interned in camps.

20/11/45 He married Alice Portmann, she had set her eyes on him way back!! Children followed in quick succession: Joseph, Franz, Peter, Kurt, Heidi (finally a girl), Bruno. They were a typical Swiss farming family and can recall their LUABSACK mattresses, (made with dried tree-leaves) picking hazelnuts, walnuts, pears, cherries and preserving them for winter use. In 1948 Sepp founded the Alpnach Yodel Group and had belonged to the Hergiswil Group since 1940. During this productive time the farm and family flourished but having 6 cows and 6 children, and no hope of increasing land size, a decision was made to emigrate.

While details and arrangements were finalised the locals didn't know whether to believe what they heard.

Franz (my brother) can remember his teacher asking him to come outside of the class room as he needed to ask him something; Was it really true that they were leaving for New Zealand? Once the idea had sunk in Joe's class actually studied New Zealand before his departure! The farm was sold to the local council. The motorbike was sold and a car purchased. Sepp's brother, Domini, didn't believe they were leaving until he followed the containers to the Railway Station and read the forwarding addresses !!! So began the great adventure.

1961 the Liner "Oranje", which was operating a round-the-world-ser-



vice, became their home for approximately 5 weeks. Alice couldn't find the laundry on this great liner so had ship staff do it (OH what bliss!!). Heidi tasted the culinary delight of "hundreds and thousands" sandwiches for the first time on board the Oranje's kindergarden. Rufer Otto and his family were also on their way to NZ and the adults often played cards to help pass the time. The manoeuvring of the "Oranje" through Panama Canal (where the children saw their first "Black" man) and the storm on route to Tahiti helped to alleviate some of

the tedious moments on the long, mostly uneventful sea journey. The Arnold family were met in Auckland by cold, miserable weather and by Marie-Louise and her husband, Gavin Bartlett. The 5 boys were fitted out in their Swiss costumes and were photographed with their Alphorn and Swissflag, by NZ Herald and appeared as the "Armoud" (misprint in Herald) family in June 15th Edition 1961.

The exchange rate was pretty favorable (The pound = 12.40 Swiss francs.) The accumulation of household ware began, Barton and Ross of Hamilton were surprised when their whole stock of beds (as well as 2 more on back order) were purchased and paid for by cash.

Sepp's NZ farming career began at Hairini where he worked for 4 months for 10 pounds a week. While he was learning farming NZ style, Alice was combing shops for culinary delights but this was not to be. The Baked Beans tasted sweet, a pleasant tasting coffee was hard to find and salamis, yoghurt and decent cheeses were unheard of.

Sepp was the only one who had a smattering of English. The children quickly learnt

the swear words while their mother Alice handled it differently - she would always run outside if the phone rang and convince herself she couldn't hear it, so she wouldn't have to answer it !!!

The president of the Hamilton Swiss Club had heard about the arrival of a Swiss family in the area and went to look for them.....when he saw the large feather duvets sunning on the windowsill of a house, he knew he had found them!!! Alice and Sepp joined the Club and then started the Yodel Chorli with Hans + Heiri Oettli, Ernst Studer and Rinaldo Rust. Many social events were enjoyed by all while they moved up the farming ladder eventually they share milked 120 cows at Springdale and then purchased a farm in 1964 at Tahuna. As the herd grew one more addition was made to the family itself, in 1964 Andrew, the only "kiwi" in the family was born. The family grew up; the farm flourished and was eventually passed to Franz in 1978. Alice and Sepp moved to Hamilton Lake and still enjoy Swiss visitors, Swiss culture and their friends and family.