

Snippets from Switzerland

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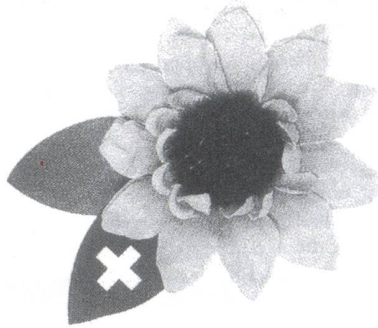
Upcoming Swiss Cultural Events in New Zealand

(As indicated by the Swiss Embassy - Wellington)

The Swiss Embassy in co-operation with 'Pro Helvetia-Arts Council of Switzerland' is pleased to announce the **Photographic Exhibition** of '*The Patient Planet/So Many Worlds*' for 1999.

Christchurch	Canterbury Museum	5 May - 7 June 1999
Palmerston North	Manawatu Art Gallery	19 June - 1 August 1999
Wellington	Dowse Art Gallery (Lower Hutt)	21 August - 21 November 1999
Auckland	Auckland Art Gallery	11 Dec. 1999 - 23 Jan. 2000

The Patient Planet/So Many Worlds is a remarkable exhibition of photographs which tells the story of the major political and human events of the second half of the twentieth century. Turbulent, yet touching, the 255 images tell individual stories with formidable authenticity, a factor which is frequently overlooked in today's art-directed or manipulated images. Nearly all the renowned names of humanistic photojournalism are represented including Switzerland's Werner Bischof, together with Henri Cartier-Bresson, René Burri, Robert Frank and many others. This is an important exhibition, brought to New Zealand by Pro Helvetia, Arts Council of Switzerland, and should be of great interest to every age group - it is a photographic history of the world that is our's.



31.3.99 - A letter of thanks !

The Swiss Embassy in Wellington has received a letter of thanks from the **Swiss Foundation PRO PATRIA**, confirming receipt of NZD 965.00, the proceeds from the sale of last years **1.August-emblem**.

The message from the foundation contains words of gratitude to all compatriots who have contributed to this splendid result by purchasing the '**sunflower-emblem**'. All proceeds from within Switzerland and from abroad are being used for the protection of nature reserves in the Cantons of St.Gall, Berne, Fribourg, Neuenburg, Grison and Valais.

Snippets From Switzerland

(All from April 1999)

Swiss federal office says no to genetically modified maize and potatoes.

Genetically modified plants may not be grown in Switzerland. The federal office for the environment has rejected two requests to plant genetically-modified maize and potatoes.

The office said too little was known about the consequences of the modified plants for both humans and the environment. The requests came from a private company and from the federal agricultural research centre.

Switzerland lifts embargo on Libya

In line with the United Nations, Switzerland has officially suspended sanctions against Libya, imposed after the 1988 Lockerbie bombing. It mainly affects air links between the two countries, and assets in Swiss

banks.

The economics ministry said the embargo, which was introduced in 1994, would be temporarily lifted, pending further decisions by the U-N security council. The move came after Libya handed over two suspects to an international court.

70,000 people challenge planned maternity insurance scheme

Opponents of the planned maternity insurance scheme have forced a vote on the issue. A group sponsored by the People's Party and employers organisations handed in seventy thousand signatures to the federal authorities. They said there was no need for the legal amendment, approved by parliament, and that funding was too costly. The issue will come to a nationwide vote in June.

Greens vye for seat in cabinet

The Green Party says it wants a post in the government. The party presi-

dent said it was time to reconsider the political composition of the cabinet.

He said it was time to discuss the issue of whether the People's Party should keep its seat in the cabinet, once the defence minister, Adolf Ogi, decides to step down.

The Greens hope to win at least fourteen seats in October's general election, that's three more than they hold now.

Couchepin supports debt relief for poor countries

The economics minister, Pascal Couchepin, has called for debt relief for poor countries.

Addressing a conference of French-speaking nations held in Monaco, Mr Couchepin said Switzerland supported the idea of cancelling all debts as part of development aid. Mr Couchepin is using the two-day meeting to hold bilateral talks with numerous colleagues including ministers from Vietnam and Cambodia.



The 31. 'Engadin-ski-marathon' took place in March this year. Almost 12,000 ski fans from Switzerland and various other European Countries completed the distance of 42.2 km. - First across the line was Tor Arne Hetland, (Norway) with a time of 1:25:21,9. - First Lady across the line was Brigitte Albrecht (Lax) with a time of 1:29:19,5.

Swiss-British balloon team collect prize money

The Swiss balloonist and his British co-pilot, who became the first to circle the globe non-stop, have picked up a million dollars in prize money in the United States.

Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones, were handed the cheque at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, where parts of the Breitling Orbiter balloon will go on display. The two adventurers have pledged to donate half the prize money towards humanitarian projects around the world.

Ticino police extend investigations into money laundering case

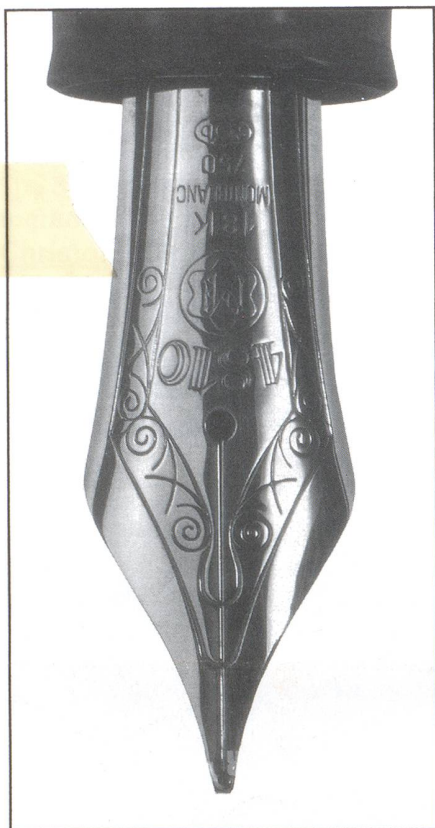
Justice authorities in canton Ticino have extended a major investigation into money laundering and drugs trafficking. A magistrate said four countries, including Tunisia, had been asked to provide legal assistance, bringing the total up to ten. The masterminds of the operation are believed to be based in the United States.

Two people have been in custody since December and seventy bank accounts have been frozen.

13th annual Geneva book fair opens

One of Switzerland's cultural highlights, the annual Geneva book fair, got underway during April.

For five days, Swiss and international bookworms have sampled the best that the literary world has to offer. This year, Canton Aargau and Spain have featured as guests of honour. The International Committee of the Red Cross was the subject of a special exhibition at the fair. Readers and writers had a chance to mingle onboard a special train running between Zürich and Geneva.



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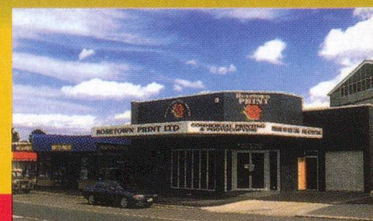
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