

Report / Swiss Abroad Congress

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **65 (1999)**

Heft [10]

PDF erstellt am: **12.07.2024**

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

31 December

New Year's Eve Social, with all the entertainment you could wish for... Happy hour(s) from around 4.00 pm, with a barbeque at 6.00 pm (BYO). Once again held in conjunction with the campervanners. Come along and let your hair down ... a night to remember!!

3 February

Kegeln recommences ... come and join in.

12 February

Annual cowbell competition semi-final against Wellington - let's show them what we're made of. Contact Walter closer to the time if you're keen to participate.

13 February

Annual Picnic to be held at the club house ... excellent entertainment and a great day for socialising. We look forward to seeing you there.

SINGING GROUP

This dedicated team of singers, flag throwers, alhorn blowers and thalerschwingers have performed at various functions. The variety of their performances is enjoyed by everyone, and the Swiss Club is proud and fortunate to have them. It is great to see Beni blowing the alhorn with all his might again...and really cute to see his son, Daniel, in Swiss costume watching his Dad blowing a tune at the Opunake Market Day. Many thanks to John and Rosemary Mulling who invited the group and friends back to their place for a delicious afternoon tea with all the trimmings. It was a thoroughly enjoyable day. The Taranaki Swiss Club wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and all the very best for the New Year. We look forward to your attendance at our functions in the year 2000.

M.B.



wellington@swiss.org.nz

Past Events....

16 October: Jassen Competition
We had an enjoyable evening; three tables with four jassers each competed in a most amiable atmosphere. Thank you, Theres Scherrer, for your crucial initial contribution to the winner's score! - And thank you also for helping with the supper!

Forthcoming Events...

The **Children's Christmas** has been **cancelled**.

**11 December - Saturday
Christmas Party,** 7.30 pm, at the Clubhouse. - For bookings ring Monika Sörensen (478 56 49) or Ruth Messmer (388 62 49).

12 December - Sunday
(if wet: 19 December)
Carol Singing in the Sound Shell in the Botanical Garden. - This is a great opportunity to present our traditional Christmas carols to a wider audience. There will be a stall with Christmas biscuits. Please be generous and bake an extra batch for this occasion; Red Cross will be grateful.
- Please let Monika Sörensen (478 56 49) know what you can contribute. - Thank you!

t.b.

**Report / Swiss Abroad
Congress**

(as supplied by Heinz Leuenberger)

At the autumn Session of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) the Delegates unanimously accepted a resolution, that the seven sectarian contracts with the EU be ratified (by the Federal Parliament) as early as possible. According to President G.Stucki, the free movement of people contained in one of the sectors, is of particular interest to the "Swissies" living in a European

Union country, emphasising the fact that close to 60 % of the 572,000 plus Swiss registered abroad, live in Western Europe.

AHV / IV

The political discussions on how to revise the voluntary AHV/IV payments are still very much up in the air. The CSA is not happy with the latest developments. The Council is still of the opinion, that all Swiss Abroad should continue to have the opportunity to join the scheme irrespective of whether there are sufficient possibilities to insure against old age in their country of residency or not.

Swiss Radio International

The Director General of the Schweizer Radio Gesellschaft (SRG) Mr. Armin Walpen, informed delegates of the new strategy the SRI is shortly going to follow. He made it very clear that in the competitive environment of international communications, the SRI had to keep up with developments - or fall behind the 'eight ball'. As a consequence, the newest form of the rapidly changing international communication, meaning the internet must be adopted. At this point in time, the Internet does not spell out

the death warrant of 'short wave radio'. He assured delegates, that while new 'vectors' were needed, short wave listeners would continue to be catered for.

The Congress

Close to 800 participants from 41 countries took part in this year's Congress in Lausanne. Ambassador Mr Bruno Spinner, chief of the integration bureau in Bern, informed compatriots of the results achieved in the negotiations with the EU. According to the best expertise available, as far as the general public is concerned, the costs of the contracts are very cost effective. The economic, as well as the ecological benefits exceed the costs incurred several times over. He also made it clear that the contracts do in no way signify a way forward in the argument to join the EU. Adding that the results are acceptable to the pro-Lobby just as much as they are acceptable to the anti-Lobby and the undecided. As is normal in Swiss politics, both camps were given time to expound their points of view. Yet, none of the major political parties was prepared to state categorically which way they are going to vote in the up-coming Parliamentary debates.

For a growing Swiss presence in the big world

Tradition has it for a member of the Federal Council to address the Congress. This year the prerogative

fell to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Joseph Deiss. He brought the best wishes from the Council to the 'Fifth Switzerland'. In his address the new Minister stressed the necessity of a much stronger presence in world affairs. To follow the present Foreign Policy, equals a continued isolation. Consequently, a new policy must be defined, naming as target the entry into the UNO as the most important for the up-coming 1999-2003 legislature. He also made it clear that Switzerland would maintain its neutrality. However, for maintaining peace, a policy of participation far outweighs a policy of neutrality that leads to isolation, vis-a-vis the multilateral security nets. Neutrality encompasses a political dimension which must be adjusted to the existing circumstances.

Disappointment

I'm very disappointed that the latest communications from the Secretariat contained no fewer than 7 pages of various forms of advertising and only 4 pages of 'real' information. One of the ads. was for applications for the Youth Session at the Federal Parliament in Bern from 16. - 21. Nov. 99. It's not that there would be many 'budding' politicians from NZ. aged between 14 and 21 that would have been interested to apply. My complaint is that applications were to be in by 20th Oct. 1999, when the info. arrived with me only 9 days earlier??

Your Delegate: Heinz Leuenberger.



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