

Two Swiss climbers receive bravery award

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The Rheinfall – and a Reinfall

Near Schaffhausen the river Rhein drops over a cliff of 23 m in height and 150m in width. The Rheinfall is one of Schaffhausen's main attractions; more about it in a later Helvetia that focuses on the canton of Schaffhausen.

The word *Reinfall* has a completely different meaning, and here is an example of a *Reinfall*:

My wife and I had differing ideas about planning (or not planning) our holidays in autumn. This year I wanted to be a good boy for a change; so I got on the internet at home and searched for accommodation. I prefer driving along the Mediterranean sea and stop where we like it best, with a bit of unspoilt coastline that reminds us of New Zealand. I admit that it can be a bit of a hassle to find accommodation that way, and we have had to put up with a hard mattress. So this time we wouldn't leave it to chance, and we settled for the "Ferienhaus mit Meersicht" near Monaco: A nice flat on the first floor with sea views just seemed right for a week.

So off we went and were shocked when we were shown the flat. It was a cellar hole without a single window, and the glass entrance door was facing a retaining wall; no sea view, nor even any other type of view! The second bedroom was a wooden floor above a garage with curtains as walls and a smelly oil tank below. The bed seemed not too bad, and as it was already past 6 pm we took the flat without comment. The fan in the bathroom could not be switched off and kept us from sleeping all night. So first thing next morning we packed our suitcases and told our landlord what we thought of his flat and the way he advertised on the Internet.

A few hours later we found what we wanted, the way we always find good spots. A one bedroom flat in a vineyard, only 10 minutes' walk from the beach. The lovely stretch of unspoiled beach though, a Scenic Reserve, made up for it. I don't expect I'll have any complaints about not booking in advance next year.

Paul Werthmüller

Neujahrsgebet des Pfarrers

Von St. Lamberti, Münster (1883)

*Herr setze dem Überfluss Grenzen,
und lasse die Grenzen überflüssig werden.
Lasse die Leute kein falsches Geld machen
aber auch das Geld keine falschen Leute.
Nimm den Ehefrauen das letzte Wort
und erinnere die Ehemänner an ihr erstes.
Schenke unseren Freunden mehr Wahrheit
und der Wahrheit mehr Freunde.
Bessere solche Beamten, Geschäfts- und Arbeitsleute,
die wohl tätig, aber nicht wohlthätig sind.
Gib den Regierenden ein besseres Deutsch
und den Deutschen eine bessere Regierung.
Herr, Sorge dafür, dass wir alle in den Himmel kommen.
Aber nicht sofort. Amen.*

Two Swiss climbers receive bravery award

The Swiss magazine Beobachter has awarded its Prix Courage to two Swiss climbers, Ueli Steck and Simon Anthamatten, for saving the life of a fellow climber.

The two men received SFr25,000 in recognition of their efforts to save two others in difficulty last May in the Annapurna peaks in Nepal.

The Romanian and Spanish climbers got into trouble at 7,400 metres. Thanks to the intervention of the two Swiss, the Romanian was able to make it off the mountain alive. Help arrived too late for his companion.

The Prix Courage jury emphasised the exceptional courage of the Swiss climbers "who did not hesitate to put themselves in danger to save these lives".

Steck and Anthamatten had to give up on their ambitious goal to conquer the south face of Annapurna I.

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Text messaging takes on Christmas character

The Swiss have broken their own record for using text messages to send Christmas greetings.

The three largest mobile phone service providers in the country said more than 62 million messages were sent on December 24 and 25 in 2007 - five million more than in 2006.

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Record amount of greens eaten

The Swiss munched their way through an average of 76kg of vegetables in 2007, four kilograms more than 2006, setting a new record.

Among the total 590,000 tonnes of vegetables consumed - of which at least half were grown in Switzerland - carrots and tomatoes were especially popular, according to a Swiss vegetable growers' association on Friday.

Almost nine kilos of carrots and 8.5 kilos of tomatoes were eaten per head. Other in-demand vegetables included iceberg lettuce, peppers, onions, cucumbers, courgettes, lettuce and cauliflower - consumption of which varied from four kilos per head down to two kilos.

Twenty years ago the Swiss got through 60kg of veg a year.

The 76kg eaten in 2007 is still short of the 109.5 kg recommended by the Federal Health Office as an annual intake - or five daily portions.

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