

Swiss Club news from around New Zealand

Objektyp: **Group**

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

Band (Jahr): **77 (2011)**

Heft [8]

PDF erstellt am: **14.09.2024**

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Taranaki

Sadly a number of our members have been unwell or required surgery over the last few months, and we wish you all a speedy recovery and all the very best. It has been good to see Zeno at the Swiss Club again, and we hope that you will be able to play the accordion again soon. Erna, we are all thinking of you and Michael, while Michael is undergoing surgery and rehabilitation at Burwood Spinal Unit ... and Remigi we hope that the spring isn't too hard on you. Our thoughts are with all of you, as well as all our other "Swiss Club family members" who are sick or frail at this time. Take care.

Past Events:

Card results for the last Sunday afternoon are as follows:

17 July:

Jassen

- 1st Josie Gillbanks
- 2nd Heidi Werder
- 3rd Robert Buhler
- Booby : Marlies Hebler

Euchre

1st Noeline Shaw all the way from the South Island ... nice seeing you Noeline, and thanks for coming with your Aunty to the cards.

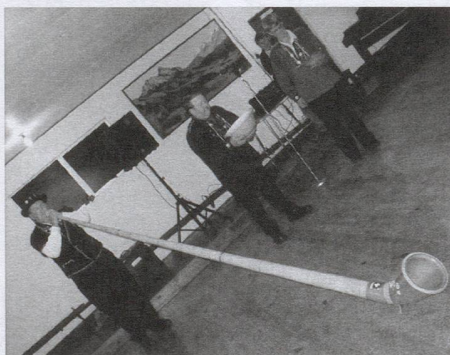
- 2nd Edi Fuglistaller
- Booby - Johnny Bishop

The raffle winners were Othmar, Jean, Johnny and Josie.

Thank you to all those members who attended the card afternoons. Walter appreciated you being there, and the committee would like to thank Walter for his time organising and collating the results for these afternoons. Let's hope for a few more participants next year!!!

On the 28th July the singing group entertained at the Eltham Fire Station for the Women's section of the RSA. The variety of our entertainment was appreciated by the very attentive audience. And we uncovered a new talent ... Heidi Werder was superb at the "Talerschwingen" accompanied by the reliable Walter Seifert (neither of them 'lost' their sFr5!!!). Thank you to all the people who came to entertain, and Zeno our supervisor ... we appreciate your efforts in coming, Zeno. This afternoon was a good practice for the 1st of August celebrations!!!

On the 30th July we held our Swiss National Day celebrations, with a good crowd of one hundred adults and ten children (who were all very well behaved and quiet when required!). Upon arrival everyone was offered a glass of "Glühwein" made by Margaret Bishop ... thank you Margaret, everyone commented on how delicious it was!!! Just after 7.30pm the formalities started with a warm welcome extended to everyone by our president, Othmar, and then we listened to the speech by the President of the Swiss Confederation, Mrs Micheline Calmy-Rey. There followed the singing of the National Anthem and several songs by the singing group. We were so fortunate to have a variety of en-



Is that alphorn getting longer?

tertainment - two lovely duets sung by Silvia and Lisette, several songs by the singing group, Talerschwingen by Walter and Heidi, Alphorn by Othmar, accordion music by Leo, Aaron and



Happy 100th Birthday!!

Mary Steiner (nee Holdener) was born in Steinen, Switzerland on 1st September 1911, but sadly her twin brother died at birth. When Mary was two years old she came to New Zealand with her family, and they farmed at Hawera on the property that is now Fonterra.

In 1936 Mary married John Steiner (Past President of the Taranaki Swiss Club and also the Swiss Society of New Zealand) and they farmed at Mahoe. In 1960 they sold the farm and had a holiday in Switzerland, and on their return they lived in New Plymouth. John passed away in 1991 and Mary continued to live in the house until six years ago when she became a resident at Telford Rest Home. Her sister Hilda lives in Hawera and a second brother died at eighteen months of age.

Mary was a wonderful cook, a great gardener and excellent at many crafts.

Mary's 100th birthday was celebrated with family and friends at Telford Rest Home and included a visit from New Plymouth mayor, Harry Duynhoven.

On behalf of the Taranaki Swiss Club, congratulations on your 100th birthday, and we wish you all the very best. Many thanks to her niece, Rosie, for providing us with this report and photo.



Our home-grown entertainment...



... and a Philipino performance

Marianne accompanied by Maria on the piano and percussion instruments from Walter, Remigi, Franz and Heidi (what a talented lady - she even makes music with a broom ... doesn't matter that she broke the half-brush in the process!!!) and a group of Philipinos who added another cultural dimension to our evening. Several trophies were then awarded to worthy recipients: The Zürcher Cup for Jassen was won by Heidi Werder (closely followed by Walter Seifert - two points behind!!!), the Len and Molly Chamberlain Trophy (for Literature) was won by Helen Hall for her interesting book on the Zimmerman and Flüehler families, and the Joe Dettling Memorial Cup (for Karabiner Shooting) was won by Mark Kiser. We then proceeded to sell the tombola tickets which went like hot cakes ... our very grateful thanks to the Swiss Deli for donating some delicious hams ... I'm sure that the hams were the reason behind the tombola tickets selling so well!!! The appreciative winners of the hams were Peter Kaiser and Shane Wolfe, who I am sure will enjoy them!!! Thanks also to the Noetzli family for donating several items towards our tombola ... we really appreciate your kindness. Following a delicious supper of Swiss Deli fine meats, cheese from Mercer, asparagus rolls and

many wonderful biscuits and cakes, the Swiss Society medals were handed out. Congratulations to all the participants and especially the winners. Those skilled or lucky enough to win "double medals" were Remigi Zimmermann, Mark Kiser and Marlies Hebler. Well done!!! The evening was most successful, with people enjoying the varied entertainment and catching up with people that they either see regularly, or once every so often!!! It was great to see some new faces at the Swiss National Day celebrations, and we hope that we will see you again!!! On behalf of the committee, thank you all for coming and good luck in the spring!!!

On the following day, 31st July, all committee members who were able arrived to clean up (with much of it already done by Tracey and Lisette who had stayed the night in their campervans). Upon completion of the clean-up (which didn't take much) we all enjoyed lunch outside, followed by a committee meeting to tidy up all the loose ends of the past few months. At the previous committee meeting it had been passed that the Taranaki Swiss Club donates \$2,500.00 to the Red Cross Christchurch Earthquake Relief Fund. This has been possible due to our members supporting our functions and particularly our raffles very generously, and we would like to thank you all very much. Othmar thanked everyone for their tremendous help to ensure the success of another evening, especially the ladies for their delicious baking!!! Following the closure of the meeting, everyone was happy to go home, knowing that we had had another terrific function, and eager to catch up on some neglected sleep!!!

Future Events:

October 6 & 20: Keglen recommences under the wonderful

leadership of Johnny ... please go along and support him. They always have lots of fun and a delicious supper is enjoyed.

October 8: The Stratford Camera Club is holding a convention with the theme being "Expect the Unexpected".

They would like as many people in Swiss costume as possible to act as models ... where?: at the Stratford Plateau ... when?: Saturday 8th October ... what time?: 6.30am ... yes, you have read correctly 6.30 in the morning ... well, that is expecting the unexpected!!!

So would all those who can, please turn up so that members of the Stratford Camera Club can take photos?

Many thanks ... and just imagine how much more you can pack into your day by having an early start!!!

October 16: Mark is our totally dedicated small bore rifle master, and today **the Trudi Ott Belt Shoot will be held, together with the Championship Shoot**, from 1.00pm. Please go along and support him, as I'm sure that he would love to see you.

November 3 & 17: Keglen once again ... lots of fun with a great bunch of people. Starts at 8.00pm until ...

November 13: We are doing another sausage order with delectables from the Swiss Deli ... please would everyone have their orders in to Lisette on 06 762 8718 or Marianne on 06 762 8757 by the 13th of November. Thanks for your help in making our job easier by ordering on time.

November 20: Ted Napflin Memorial Shield and Championship Shoot from 1.00pm.

Please make an effort to attend; Mark would love to see you. Great to see a few juniors participating ... so come along parents and bring your children to give shooting a go!!!



November 27: Mark Kiser organises the **Christmas Shoot/Keglen** wonderfully. The competition starts at 10.00am, with a pot-luck lunch held around noon.

All competitors need to bring a wrapped prize worth at least \$10.00, and will of course receive one back at prize giving. Father Christmas makes an appearance and parents/grandparents are asked to bring a wrapped, named prize for their children/grandchildren. This is a wonderful social day before the hectic Christmas rush starts ... so come along and support Mark.

December 31: New Year's Eve ... once again the time is upon us to farewell the Old year and welcome the New one!!! The club house gates will be open by 4.00pm, with a BYO BBQ at 6.00pm. The evening is always full of fun and laughter ... so if you are able to provide any skits, music or other entertainment, please let Ruedi and Lisette Benkert or Leo and Doreen Zehnder know ... they would love to hear from you!!! MD

Wellington

Past Events:

20th July – We had one of our (almost) regular “**Krabbelgruppe**” (understand “coffee group”) on Wednesday 20th July. We were four mums and 9 kids, ages ranging from five months to six years.



Eating our artwork

The kids were happy to meet each other again and soon the house was busy with mums and kids speaking English, German and French and sometimes all three languages at once. We made some cooking art, mixing coloured icing sugar and applying it on cookies. The weather was nice enough to allow the sugar filled kids to spend some energy outside later, riding bikes and feeding the dog some treats. We are having a Krabbelgruppe roughly once every school holidays, taking turns for hosting. If you are interested in joining us, either contact Sibylle (ph. 461 61 47) or post on the Wellington Swiss Club group on FaceBook.

30 July: National Day Celebration:

The tables were beautifully decorated with paper sent especially from Switzerland. We started with our usual Glühwein (mmhmm! First come first served; latecomers sometimes miss out!)

Theres had cooked delicious pastetli (vol-aux-vents), filled with chicken, mushrooms - and a



Beautifully decorated tables

few secret ingredients. The pastetli lids were not the usual round things; Theres had made Swiss crosses. They tasted great! So did the vegetables, the beans, the carrots, the potatoes - and what was the other vegetable, whitish, sweet, really nice, a bit un-Swiss? For the first time in a long while we had parsnip, and it looked like chips... All tasted wonderful; thank you very much, Theres and Hans Scherrer!

Dinner was BYO as usual, plus some bottles of Swiss wine generously offered by our Swiss Embassy.



Our president Trudi and our cook Theres

Before dessert we listened to the speech of the Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey and sang the national anthem.

Kids were a great help that night: Zita and Gina sold the 1st August badges, Jake and Zoe rang the bell. James and Lars made sure everybody got dessert.

1st August: Fire on Petone Beach

We had a great fire. The tide didn't quite cooperate, but it was one of the best fires ever and it was on an almost calm and relatively warm winter night. We actually had two fires for some time. A smaller fire was started

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for the children so they were able to roast marshmallows. Many had brought their lanterns. Someone had the great idea to bring sparklers, which was a big success with the younger members.



The big fire on Petone Beach

Then we enjoyed Peter's traditional fireworks and finished the evening with songs by the fire. Thank you very much, Heinz, Trix, Peter!

Legend has it that late in the night three Geschworene stayed by the fire long after everyone else was gone.. OS

28 August: Soup Lunch and Jass Afternoon - The crowd of keen jassers wasn't exactly overwhelming, and I'm sure there would have been enough coffee and cake for a few more. Anyway:

We had a very pleasant afternoon with lots of laughter. Who won? Well, obviously the ones who did not have the bad luck to be burdened with me! Let's hope it is warmer next time and we can sit in the sun! tb

10th September: Second Fondue - Many Wellingtonian Swiss seem to be overseas still -but the ones who are here and did come had a very enjoyable evening, with Glühwein, a mixed salad, Fondue and Heidi's delicious dessert - which left almost no room for coffee and cake to round the evening off.



FIGUGEGL

Sibylle brought her Swiss visitors, and they slaved away all afternoon and did a lot of dishes, too. Max, who had bought his secret mix of delicious cheeses, instructed a dedicated crew of fondue stirrers to get it just right, and they did. The caquelons were pretty empty, and it was a lot of cheese.



The main medal winners...

John Jordan handed out the medals; it has to be said that he kept most of them in his clan.

Gina, Lars and Ariana were keen ticket sellers for our tombola with very attractive prizes. The tickets were a bit antique, but they contained many words of wisdom. And some contained numbers, too!

A huge thank you to all who came and enjoyed the evening - and a very special thank you to the ones who worked so hard: Peter, Heidi and Günter, Sibylle with Patricia and Marie and all the others who chipped in. We had some new faces in the club; let's hope they'll find the way to the Swiss Club again! tb

Future Events:

Sunday 25 September: Soup Lunch and Jass afternoon - Please let Trudi (562 8019) know if you come for the Soup, served at noon. If you come only for the afternoon, booking is not neces-



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sary. Jassen will be played from 1pm onwards; if you don't play cards, bring along your Rummi-kub or anything else you'd like to play, or your knitting/embroidery/crochet - or anything else you'd like to share! This will also be a good opportunity to bring along anything you'd like to contribute to the November Garage Sale.

Saturday 1st October: Concert at the Clubhouse - We'll invite the orchestra to an early pot-luck dinner at 5:30. After dinner, the Upper Hutt Orchestra will play. Please book with Sandie (528 6960). This will also be a good opportunity to bring along anything you'd like to contribute to the November Garage Sale.

Sunday 23 October: Walk and Picnic at Wellington Botanical Garden. - We'll meet at 11:30 by the fountain of the Rose Garden, then we'll eat (bring your picnic or buy something there) and walk around. Children will love the playground!

Sunday 30 October: Soup Lunch at the Clubhouse: Jass afternoon 1pm onwards. There will also be a QUIZ! Please register with Odile if interested (586 3095). Details will follow. OS

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CONGRATULATIONS!



Christie Rosa Keller

Christian Keller and Hilary King have a new family member. Christie Rosa arrived on 29 July at Wellington Hospital, weighing in at 3.01kg



Rebecca Grace Press

We're pleased to announce that Leah and Helen now have a little sister, Rebecca Grace Press, born 11 August 2011, weighing 3.4 kg.



Nicolai Olivier Wilson-Bray

Mariève is proud sister to Nicolai Olivier Wilson-Bray (Mr Bébé), born on 6 August 2011.

Auckland

Past Events:

10 pin bowling, Sunday 17 July - 20 people enjoyed a friendly competition, and came bowling despite this having been the first sunny day after a lot of rain. Practice makes perfect - Marcel was the winner, and Erika the first amongst the women. Congratulations to all! For results see our website, www.swiss.org.nz

National Day Celebration 30 July 2011, Penrose - A big thank you and a hug to all members and friends who made this such a successful evening! We had a record number of nearly 140 people, and even had to turn some away. I am aware that I might forget some names but still would like to mention a few. Thanks to:

- Edith, Erika, Fiona, Lukas for preparing and arranging the clever table and hall decorations
- Franz for the 'Erst August Weggen', so pretty and appropriate
- Marcel for making the Glühwein, for programs, for wonderful Risotto, and for keeping the whole evening together
- Carmen, Erika and all helpers for arranging the very popular antipasto plates
- Edith for all the shopping, for preparing the chicken, the mushroom sauce, and a delicious Tiramisu. Just as well we had some time to digest it before getting behind the wheel, there was more than just a smidgen of Liquor. Edith kindly shared the secret, it was Amaretto and Cointreau.
- Adrian for serving Glühwein, doing the raffle and being wherever needed.
- Ursula and her team of five young helpers for the efficient, friendly service, and all the washing up in the kitchen.
- The children who made it



feel real with their Lampion - Parade, and their parents who got them all organised.



Weiss nicht, ob das von Auckland ist.

All the brave people who helped with the entertainment - Peter with the Alphorn, Ursi, Peter and Oski with their wonderful Alphorn/Accordion/Yodel trio,



Oski, Peter and Ursi

Oliver who is getting better every year with his drums, Tessa who delighted everyone with her harp playing, Pamela and Daniel for the arias, and my friends from the women's choir. It was neat to hear people joining in to our singing of well known Swiss tunes.

- Everyone who was there and shared their joy.

National Day at the farm - 01 August 2011 - 18 people came for the authentic celebration. Look at the spectacular bonfire!

Pub night Friday 05 August - The August issue of the pub night took place in the Union Post Brewbar in Ellerslie, a venue we hadn't been before. As so often on pub nights we were happy to see some new faces around. The fact that the venue was quite crowded showed us that we are not the only ones to appreciate a



6m tall Firedragon

good pub. Nevertheless we were able to take over two tables over the course of the evening. Although we had to raise our voices a little bit, we spent another enjoyable night talking and catching up with our fellow Swiss Club members.

Jassen: Friday 12 August

1st	Nelly Steinemann	4410
2nd	Neil Kaiser	4062
3rd	Heidi Wilson	4046
4th	Adrian Blaser	4021
5th	Fidel Good	3939
6th	Marcel Ruedi	3935
7th	Andrew Iten	3915
8th	Carmen Gordon	3863
9th	Dieter Baumgartner	3816
10th	Ian Gordon	3775
11th	Edith Hess	3669
12th	Marie Th Melville	3632
13th	Franz Krieger	3592
14th	Berta Good	3580
15th	Lynne Dunphy	3565
16th	David Kandziora	3544
17th	Matthew Kaiser	3479
18th	Louis Wallimann	3412
19th	Anita Steinemann	3337

Film and Soup evening: Hunkeler macht Sachen: Friday 02 September - Two dozen of our members and families had a delicious soup dinner - Barley-, chicken and mushroom-, Goulash-soup, plus a very interesting Pea

soup with snowballs floating on top. Thank you Edith! The film was certainly entertaining, but also thought provoking. It was sobering to be reminded about gypsy children having been taken away from their families. One hopes we are more tolerant of other lifestyles now.

Jassen Friday 09 September

I did feel a bit disloyal to New Zealand when I drove to Penrose on a deserted motorway - everyone else seemed to watch the rugby opening ceremony and the first game in one way or another. But that feeling soon went, the ten of us (40% of them were Itens) had great fun, and the evening went very fast. We even left the hall well before 11, never before had we been so early!

1st	Fidel Good	4170	
2nd	Hans Iten		3926
3rd	Nelly Steinemann		3875
4th	Andrew Iten		3824
5th	Hilda Iten		3822
6th	Louis Wallimann		3701
7th	Heidi Wilson		3691
8th	Franz Krieger		3659
9th	Lynne Dunphy		3608
10th	Marcel Ruedi		3404

So we all finished early and the All Blacks won without our support.

Future Events:

Waitakere Rain Forest Express: Sunday 2 October. Just in case you have not received your email yet: Now is your last chance to register, provided there are still spaces left. We meet at 11 at Jacobson Depot, 280 Scenic Drive. The narrow gauge train will take us through forest, tunnels, over viaducts, and offer wonderful views of the Manukau Harbour. A paradise for photographers! We will have a picnic at the Upper Nihotupu Dam, and will return to our cars around 3pm. There is an option to walk one way, contact Nelly Steinemann 4794038 or nsteinemann@xtra.co.nz



Pub night: Friday 07 October
8pm: Bricklane Restaurant, 5
 Clark St, New Lynn, Waitakere.
 There is no rugby on that night,
 so you can treat yourself to a
 change of theme, and join the
 Swiss!

Jassen: Friday 14 October
7.30pm Danish Club, 6 Rock-
ridge Ave, Penrose

All welcome, tutoring avail-
 able. Please be there at 7.30 so
 we can start on time!

Two day excursion: Sorry
folks, we decided to postpone
 the two day outing until March
 next year. The calendar has been
 getting a bit full, and your com-
 mittee felt we would not attract
 enough participants in Novem-
 ber.

Lebkuchen Decorating: Sun-
day 20 November

Santa: Sunday 04 December
at the Swiss farm.

Christmas Carol Singing Sat-
urday afternoon 10 December
 at the Danish Club Hall, 6 Rockridge
 Ave Penrose.

Other News:

Keep Sunday night 20 No-
vember free please:

Pia Wittwer (Adrian's better
 half) is fundraising for Catwalk,
 the Spinal Cord Injury Trust. To
 this end she will run the New
 York Marathon on November 6.
 She has pledged to fundraise at
 least \$5000 for the charity. She
 will organise an evening on Sun-
 day, November 20 at the Danish
 Hall. There will be a simple din-
 ner, followed by entertainment.
 At this stage, the plan is for din-
 ner at 6pm, entertainment from
 7pm. There will be a raffle and
 also potentially an auction with a
 few special items. Tickets will be
 around \$30, bar will be open.
 Some help on the night will be
 appreciated.

More in the next edition of
 Helvetia! *Nelly Steinemann*

Hamilton

Past Events:

National Day Celebrations

Again we chose to have our
 National Day celebration on a
 Sunday as last year's lunch-time
 function proved to be very popu-
 lar. We had about 100 members
 and friends turn up promptly at
 the Matangi Hall and after a
 brief welcome by the president
 everyone was ready to queue up
 for their buffet lunch. We had
 copious supplies of sauerkraut,
 potatoes, speck, ham and two
 types of sausages. No one went
 hungry and most people had a
 chance to come back for sec-
 onds. There were lots of com-



Our young musicians

ments how delicious everything
 was, so the cooks and committee
 will take that as a compli-
 ment. Before and after lunch,
 everyone had a chance to listen
 to Bruno Epp and his cousin visit-
 ing from Switzerland play the
 Swiss accordion. We also had a
 chance to listen to the Bundes-
 president deliver the speech in
 honour of the National Day cele-
 brations and this was followed by
 everyone singing the Swiss Na-
 tional Anthem.

Before the speech everyone
 had the opportunity to buy raffle
 tickets and these were drawn
 fairly promptly and many people
 were lucky to win one of many
 donated prizes. Many thanks to
 everyone who bought tickets and
 to all those that donated



What a selection

prizes. We also had quite a few
 children who brought along their
 lampions so a group of children
 came up to the stage for a small
 parade. Great to see so many
 new young faces.



The next generation

It wasn't long before it was
 time to serve coffee and cakes
 and again there was an amazing
 selection of baking - you would
 not get this variety and quality at
 many other places! I think every-
 one appreciates the efforts of
 those ladies (and some men??)
 who provide baking.

Another very successful func-
 tion thanks to all the willing com-
 mittee and other helpers.

Family Walk - Karapiro

A group of hardy 15 Hamilton
 Swiss Club members met at the
 new Don Rowlands Centre, at
 Karapiro's Mighty River Domain,
 which had been showcased
 at last November's World Rowing
 Championship. The walkers set
 out in a brisk pace to combat the
 chilly but sunny weather condi-
 tions. The 5.5km almost
 flat walking track from Karapiro
 Dam to outskirts of Leamington

was commenced by all but some of the YOUNGER faction were the first to turn around while the less young contingent continued and enjoyed the rolling farmland scenery as they walked and talked. But it was only 3 - Richard Wehrle, Vitus Achermann and Max Schwitzer - who completed the full circuit and joined the rest for lunch and coffee at Richard and Heidi Wehrle's Karapiro property.



A well deserved lunch

Many thanks to the Wehrle's for their hospitality.

Future Events:

Family Walk - Sunday 30th October: 11am - please note the meeting place is now at the **Information Centre by the Te Aroha Domain on Whitaker St.** There is plenty of parking there. The group will then split and some can drive to Tui Road and others will walk. This will be sorted on the day depending on numbers and levels of fitness. There is also a mountain-bike trail nearby so if older children or energetic adults wish to bring their mountain bikes, then bring your bikes and give it a go. Please bring a picnic lunch or there are cafes nearby. There is also the option of visiting the hot pools after the walk. AZ

*Nicht hinaussehen
über den Rand des
Glücks,
das wäre Glück.*

Martin Walser

Notes from the 89th Auslandschweizer-Kongress,
26-28 August 2011 in Lugano

Conference Theme: Direct Democracy in the International Context

Friday was the sitting of the **Auslandschweizererrat**. **Main topics:**

Last year the big item was the proposal for **legislation** to protect and promote the rights of Swiss abroad. **Ständerat Filippo Lombardi** and 30 others introduced that at the end of this summer's legislative session, but... Although there are lots of warm words about Bund support, progress will be slow (maybe three years), and some folk think support will be hard to gather in a cost-cutting environment.

E-voting. This received the most coverage in the media. Three cantons are trialling it, but progress is much slower than expected, and there is resistance against it in various cantons because of concerns about security and confidentiality. The push is to have it available for election 2015.

Personenfreizügigkeit; (Mobility) 42,000 Swiss live in the EU. The existing bi-lateral agreement which gives the same rights of mobility between Switzerland and the EU as within the EU, has been challenged by a recent referendum would reduce some aspects of that. ASO resolved to ask the Parties to maintain and protect the rights of movement between EU and Switzerland for the benefits of citizens of both. Though there were some strong, and applauded, speeches about not wanting to import criminality (the referendum was about exporting EU citizens convicted of crimes) the resolution was passed unanimously with some abstentions.

Consular services. Service and coverage is a real issue for some countries. Looking for new ways of working with reduced costs, and maintaining a 24hour helpline, particularly for help in catastrophes.

Communications. Great support by users means the on-line services of Swiss Review and Swisscommunity.org have survived budget scrutiny and the paper version Swiss Review has gone up again to 5 issues p.a.

Friday night - A Political Panel with representatives of the 5 main parties. Topics were largely about tactics for handling the impact of the

high Swiss franc - since overtaken by events!

Of course there were significant differences of views, but delivered in the "cordial aggression" spirit of Swiss politics.

Saturday was **Congress**

Main topics

- Direct Democracy as part of the Swiss Identity
- The will of the people (*Volks-souveränität*) and international rights - a contradiction?
- Direct Democracy & participation of Swiss abroad in the age of e-voting
- Participation in European and global platforms
- Direct Democracy as a Swiss export article

The most interesting challenge seems to be the second point - as was highlighted in the *Personenfreizügigkeit* debate the day before. How does Switzerland reconcile its position when the will of the people as expressed in a referendum runs counter to human rights conventions?

For more - there will be video highlights of the Congress in Swiss Review On-line:
www.swisscommunity.org

Mani's Comment

I am questioning the value of the Congress. It's interesting, but expensive to stage and attend. The issues across the world are very varied, and the Rat format really doesn't cater for that, or for much more than rubber-stamping resolutions. (Carolyn says she would redesign the programme!)

The proposed legislation probably will have no impact for Swiss in our part of the world - though it may be a useful vehicle for promoting the interests of Swiss in the EU through the bi-lateral agreements. But - the legislation is likely to take as long as the proposed hotel on the piece of land we all bought in Brunnen (40 years?).

Perhaps there's a better way to engage Swiss abroad in collective influence and decision-making.