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*From the editor**Dear Helvetia Readers*

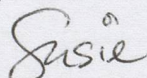
Spring is in the air. It's the small things that give so much pleasure - the many coloured cherry blossoms that are emerging everywhere, flourishing camellias and magnolias, and of course also the green leaf buds that are now breaking through. I know the farmers among us will have been really busy with lambing and calving - we wish you the very best for this busy time of year.

Unfortunately, there ain't too many lambs and calves in the great smoke of Auckland! But we do have some other pleasures. Many members of the Auckland Swiss Club recently enjoyed the wonderful performance of the Faust Quartett of Switzerland, playing an eclectic selection of music to an enchanted audience. Simone Roggen, daughter of Osci Roggen, who plays first violin in the quartet, has grown into a first class musician and an amazing young woman. I do hope some of you made it to one of the many performances throughout New Zealand.

The Helvetia team is very pleased to welcome new Ambassador David Vogelsanger and his wife Laura to New Zealand, and to print his first message to Swiss Society members in this issue of the Helvetia. We look forward to meeting him and his wife when the occasion arises.

Alas, this spring issue of the Helvetia also brings me to the end of my stint as the Editor. I have to step down for health reasons and take things more slowly for a while - something that's not really in my genetic makeup! I will have to learn to be a human being rather than a human doing, as they say. However, I am delighted to remain on a re-shuffled Helvetia team and make ongoing contributions, and of course help the new Editor as much as possible with her/his new role. Being the Editor of the Helvetia has been very enjoyable, at times challenging, but overall hugely rewarding. I am amazed how much more I now know about Switzerland and hope this may be the same for you. Most importantly, I thank you all for being such gracious and kind readers. Big thanks also go to the Helvetia team members, club secretaries and the President Tanja for their wonderful support, something I also intend to provide for the new Editor.

Uf Widerluege,


From the president

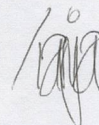
Dear Helvetia Readers,

The sun is out, the heater is off and I feel I can finally wake up from my hibernation. The veggie seedlings are planted and I'm determined to harvest my first tomato before Herbert in Hamilton does... This is a bit of a 'cheesy' Helvetia issue (and I really can't stand cheese at all!) but all these inspiring articles about Gruyère make me want to go and visit that region.

Wellington is lucky to have a new Swiss resident – our new Swiss Ambassador Dr. David Vogelsanger. On behalf of the Swiss Society I welcome Mr. Vogelsanger and his wife to New Zealand and hope they will have a wonderful and unforgettable stay in our beautiful country. I am sure we will have a prosperous relationship with our new Ambassador and hope to have many interesting and inspiring articles in our future Helvetias.

One door opens and sadly another closes... it's with a twinge of sadness that we farewell our wonderful Editor Susie Wood – the Helvetia would not be what it is today if it wasn't for you Susie and you can be ever so proud of what you have achieved. Luckily for us, Susie is still staying in the Helvetia team to make sure things don't fall apart completely. But the reins will hopefully be handed over to a new editor soon – we just have to do a tad more arm twisting... On behalf of the Swiss Society I would like to thank Susie very much for her tireless effort and huge amount of work she has put into our Helvetia over the last couple of years. We could not have started off as well as we did without her! Susie, we wish you only the very, very best on your future path.

Yours,


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