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AGM 2015 Minutes

The Swiss Society of New Zealand

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

Held on Sunday, 31 May 2015 at 2pm, at the Wellington Swiss Club House in Wainuiomata

Present:

Dr David Vogelsanger, Ambassador and our Patron; Jürg Bono, counsellor and deputy head of mission from the Swiss Embassy, and 48 members of the Swiss Society.

Welcome

Tanja Latham-Zurbrugg, President of the Swiss Society of New Zealand, welcomed all present, with special thanks to David Vogelsanger, Jürg Bono and the Wellington Swiss Club.

Apologies

- Hamilton: Vitus Achermann, Willetta Stäheli
- Taranaki: Johnny Bishop, Ruedi & Vreni Kull, Ruedi & Lisette Benkert, Zeno von Hospenthal, Remigi & Erna Zimmermann, Margrit Dudli
- Wellington: nil
- Auckland: Carmen Fitz-Gordon, Ueli and Dominic Hess

Moved Marianne Drummond, seconded Peter Canziani

Appointment of Scrutineers

Adrian Blaser, Hans Vetsch, nominated by Marianne Drummond, seconded by Herbert Stäheli

Minutes AGM 2014 in Kaponga, Taranaki

Appeared in Helvetia, and distributed today.

Correction: Apologies, should read Rinaldo Rust (not Rinaldo Wust)

Moved Henry Werffeli, seconded Albi Schuler

Obituary:

Sadly, some of our members have passed away in the past year:

TARANAKI: Eric Meuli, John Kuriger, Brian Luond, Laura Hiestand, Adolf Hardegger

WELLINGTON: Ruth Messmer

HAMILTON: Jack Dünner, Lina Arnet, Max Nussberger, Nelly Mojel (who had more recently moved to Auckland and has been a society member when she lived there)

A minute of silence was observed in remembrance of these members.

Presidents report (Tanja Latham-Zurbrugg)

Tanja thanked the members of the Society Committee, the Helvetia Committee and the six proof readers for all their involvement.

The Society has had some changes of Helvetia editor: Susie Wood had resigned last year, Victoria Egli took over for three editions, and now it's Tanja with the help of Susie.

Swiss Review: Since the beginning of the year New Zealand has been receiving the Oceania edition, rather than the previous generic version with no particular accents on any regions. New Zealand news can be found in one of the four pages dedicated to the Oceania region, the other three pages are taken up by Australian news.

Our new database went live in August 2014, and is working very well. Tanja thanked David Latham for organising and maintaining it.

Moved Doreen Zehnder, seconded Othmar Hebler

Treasurer's Report

(Carmen Fitz-Gordon) from 31 March 2014

This was written by Carmen and presented by Tanja.

The Income and Expenditure statement was handed out to the attendants of the meeting.

We have 585 paying members, mostly members of affiliated clubs. The bank balance has decreased due to an error with our serious saver account. Overall, our finances are in good shape. Profit is a bit less than last year, partly because the error mentioned above and the money that had not been placed into the 'serious saver' account. We also now pay for our publisher. Despite this, we still made a profit of \$ 1,226, compared with \$5264 the previous year. Our accumulated funds stay at \$70,255, compared with \$ 69,029 a year ago.

Moved Herbert Stäheli, seconded Peter Ehrler

Rifle master's Report : Ernst Lanz

Results from 2014: 286 entries, 74 medal winners, including stars for multiple winners (who get one medal only, and a star on the banner of the medal). Hamilton tops the list with 125 entries and 32 winners, followed by Taranaki 83/22, Auckland 70/18, and Wellington 8/2. We are expecting this year's results this week, they will appear in the next Helvetia. Ernst thanked all the organisers and participants.

Moved Adrian Blaser, seconded Mark Kiser

Delegate for Swiss Abroad Report, Peter Ehrler.

- Peter participated in several events: Last August he was at a meeting in Baden/Aargau for 3 days. This year he was invited by the Swiss Ambassador in Australia to join in a three day meeting where all club representatives came together.

- There will be another 3 day meeting in October 2016 in Melbourne. All the presidents of Swiss clubs in Oz and NZ will be invited.

- There is discussion of changing how to elect representatives for the Swiss Abroad in the next five or six years: So far they have been elected via the clubs. Direct voting has been suggested, or a system based on 50% club voting and 50% direct voting. For the organisation this is a political issue, as they hope to have more legitimacy with the Swiss Abroad.

- Swiss banks and customers from abroad: Resolution was presented to Parliament. One chamber approved and the other did not, so this issue has been put aside. On the positive side, there has been a change in attitude by some banks in the past few months. Some advertise specifically for Swiss living overseas.

- Automatic information exchange of banks. This will be introduced. Details will be in the next Helvetia. Over 100 countries have agreed that they will participate sooner or later. Switzerland signed up with the EU and with Australia.

- Old Age Pension: this is an old issue and has been so for over 50 years. Last year, Swiss Federal Councillor Burkhalter visited New Zealand, but the NZ government was not interested in related discussions. The Embassy is looking into the issue, too.

- Swiss armed forces and the young boys: This is a good opportunity for young Swiss men and women living abroad to do 18 weeks military service, earn good money and make friends for life.

Moved Peter Canziani, second Henry Werffeli

Setting of Subscriptions 2014/15

It was suggested for this to remain at \$25 per year.

Moved Hans Vetsch, seconded Anita Zuber

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Election of Officers

Five of the six committee members are standing for re-election. As this will be the last year of Auckland holding the presidency before Hamilton takes over, we needed a new Vice President from Hamilton. Hans Vetsch was elected. Marcel Ruedi therefore resigned and we thank him for all his work.

The rest of the committee remains unchanged:

Tanja Latham-Zurbrugg, president. Ernst Lanz, Riflemaster. Carmen Fitz-Gordon, treasurer. Susie Wood, committee member. Nelly Steinemann, secretary.

Accepted unanimously,

Moved Herbert Stäheli, seconded Othmar Hebler

Club Reports

Wellington

Roland Schütz welcomed everyone to Wainuiomata. He congratulated Tanja and the committee for a magnificent Helvetia, and Hamilton for winning the Cowbell trophy. Wellington has had a good attendance at functions. Financial commitments, especially maintaining the club house, have been an ongoing concern. The Christchurch earthquakes have caused an increase in their insurance premiums. Overall the club is going ahead, things are looking positive.

Auckland

Adrian Blaser. The recent AGM brought a few changes to the committee: Treasurer Carmen and Secretary Sabine resigned. Ursula Nixon, a long serving member resigned for health reasons. Fortunately we have a new treasurer, Tobi Egli and a new Secretary, Daniela Bossard. Maggie Amacher has joined the committee. The medium age of the committee is now around 40, and the membership has been steady.

Highlights: The National Day Brunch at the farm was well received. This year it will be held on Saturday night in town. Market Day was a success again, it was our 7th. Pub nights, card nights attract a mixed number. Working bees have had a better attendance. The farm looks great, the road holds up well and the playground has been upgraded, a new swing bridge is installed and the shooting house has had a makeover. Adrian thanked to committee and farm committee for all the hard work.

Waikato

Herbert Stäheli. He was delighted to have over 20 people here from Waikato, and thrilled to win the bell. He thanked the Wellington Committee. All functions have been well attended. The Hamilton Club is in the middle of their five card evenings, averaging 40 people a night. Fondue evenings are always very popular. Hamilton is looking at a day function for national day, on Sunday 2nd August. Next year they will probably celebrate their 60th Jubilee on National Day.

Taranaki

Othmar Hebler. Taranaki have 310 members and excellent attendance at their events: 160 at the fondue, around 300 at picnic and around 130 at 1st August. Presently Joan Waldvogel from Wellington is doing a write-up of Swiss living in Taranaki. Upcoming: Sauerkraut evening in conjunction with anniversary shoot.

Othmar thanked Wellington for hosting the AGM and the Swiss Society Committee for the Helvetia editing.

General business

Peter Canziani: Peter has had contact with a 10 person music group called 'Hundsbusch' from Fitzna. They play with original

instruments and are thinking of a tour to New Zealand. They wonder whether the Swiss Society would finance their tour. At this stage Peter has written back to say sorry we cannot come up with the expenses. There was a suggestion for them to possibly play at our picnic in summer.

Hans Vetsch commented that the Society has been accumulating a lot of money. He suggested to use some of it for the people that work hard in our community, i.e. give financial support to the club that holds the function. He proposed to give a financial contribution to the Wellington club for holding the weekend's function.

Herbert Stäheli moved to give \$ 1000 to the Wellington Club, regardless of what is done next year.

Othmar seconds it.

Roland thanks the Society for this.

Tanja thanked Hans, Herbert and those present. We will discuss later within the clubs on whether to continue with this support to the hosting club.

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm

Next meeting

Sunday 06 June in Auckland, combined with celebration of 60 years of the Auckland Club.

Nelly Steinemann



Association of Swiss Mountain Cleaners dedicated to keeping Swiss Mountains clean

The Swiss Felsen Putzer (mountain cleaners), a voluntary group of tidy Swiss men and women, fulfil a vitally important role in keeping Switzerland's mountains clean.

Not long ago, the Swiss Tourism Board released a video that revealed the secret of why the Swiss mountains stay so clean. It is due to the hard work of the Association of Swiss Mountain Cleaners (Felsen Putzer), whose members daily scale the Alps, scrubbing the rocks of unsightly bird droppings. The cleaning not only maintains the beauty of the Alps, but also prevents the droppings from eating away at the rocks, causing cavities that might eventually lead to the complete erosion and disappearance of the mountains. This problem has only recently been identified as very serious by Swiss Researchers.

No wonder these volunteers do their utmost to scrub and polish mountain sides – after all, who wants half a Matterhorn! The Association always looks for new volunteers, including among Swiss living abroad. Why not give it a try – it sounds like great fun.

<http://www.myswitzerland.com/en/video/index.cfm?id=2851>

http://hoaxes.org/af_database/permalink/association_of_swiss_mountain_cleaners