

Mailbag

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Election results

Just like Jeanny Karth wrote in the "Swiss Review" 5/06, I too always read your publication with interest and pleasure. Thanks to you, I know what is going on in Switzerland because the French press is more than succinct on the matter! Your editorial says as much too.

But one piece of information is missing: election results. Couldn't you at least publish federal results, if not necessarily the cantonal ones? As a former resident of La Chaux-de-Fonds, I subscribed to L'Impartial for a long time, but that's rather expensive.

FRANÇOIS RUEFF,

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE

Which energy will be best for Switzerland?

Energy is a very topical issue again at the moment because we have to meet the extra demands, and the apostles of nuclear power are sensing a change of fortunes in the air. Thank you for choosing to address this issue. What you did not mention was power sources such as warm water collectors and geothermal energy.

1. Heat energy helps replace some or all the electrical energy used by water boilers and heating systems. It is almost absurd to use electricity to heat water. Oil- and electricity-powered water heaters can be found in nearly every household. As far as I know, warm water collector technology is relatively well-developed and could be used immediately. It only has one weakness: It isn't always available.

2. Geothermal energy has the advantage over other alternative energy sources like wind and solar power in that it is

permanently available. In this, Basel is brave enough to take on a pioneering role. And if you mark all the thermal springs in Switzerland on a map, it's surprising that this field has not been developed further long before now. My question is: Why not? Instead of spending millions more on nuclear power, it would make more sense to invest in geothermal energy. Switzerland could play a leading role in this field!

ERNST KLAHRE-PARKER, ILKESTON, DERBYSHIRE, UK

Top-class

I have received the "Swiss Review" for several years, as I am a Swiss citizen in South Africa. Your publication is top-class, the articles most interesting and the photography excellent. My compliments to you and your staff.

J. V. SANDFORD,

MARGATE, SOUTH AFRICA

Federal Councillor Blocher

Congratulations to Christophe Darbellay on his election as the new CVP president. Let's hope he can convince the Liberals to kick out Federal Councillor Blocher at the next general election and that he meets the same fate as Ruth Metzler. In my opinion, he hasn't the necessary stature to be in the regional government. He wants to be in government and in opposition, and unfortunately that isn't possible. However, I hope that SVP President Ueli Maurer isn't elected in his place. Maurer and Blocher think that only their visions are the right ones and only they can make everything better. Switzerland beware!

ALOIS BRANDENBERG,
DELTA BC, CANADA

Success and tears

Roger Federer is currently the most famous Swiss athlete in the big, wide world of sport. In his home country, he has already been voted Sportsman of the Year and named Swiss Citizen of the Year. Last year, he received the Laureus Award as World Sportsman of the Year. This year he picked up the "sporting Oscar" for a second time. Twenty-five-year-old Federer has been the world's Number One tennis player since 2004 – fully 150 weeks. Earlier this year, the tennis pro from Basel won three of the four Grand Slam tournaments (the Australian, French, British and US Open: the most important competitions on the circuit). That takes his tally of Grand Slam titles to nine, just five short of the all-time record held by America's Pete Sampras.

Yet Roger Federer's road to the pinnacle of world tennis was long and dotted with setbacks and bitter defeats. Sports writer René Stauffer has been following Federer's career since 1996. His Federer biography, entitled "Das Tennis Genie" (The Tennis Genius), recounts the young but talented player's often arduous path to tennis stardom, describes his family background and sporting influences, and paints a thoroughly readable picture of the athlete and the man.

Roger Federer showed his talent at an early age, winning the Swiss junior championships at 17 and the junior Wimbledon tournament at 18. That proved an ideal springboard to the professional circuit, and it wasn't long before he had won his first title in a "major" tournament. In July 2001, he sensationally beat his idol, Pete Sampras, in the last 16 at Wimbledon (though he couldn't clinch the championship). In 2003, he set himself the target of winning his first Grand Slam title. After failing yet again in Paris, Federer finally got hold of his long sought-after trophy at Wimbledon when he beat Mark Philippoussis in the final. He broke down in tears at the victory ceremony. The year 2004 was bathed in glory: Federer won another three Grand Slams and finally became the Number One in the world of tennis. His triumphal success continued in 2005, with seven of the last eleven Grand Slam tournaments under his belt and only the French Open at Roland Garros still proving elusive. Now, at the end of 2006, the Swiss tennis star is the undisputed leader of the ATP professional rankings, having won three of the "big four" championships,

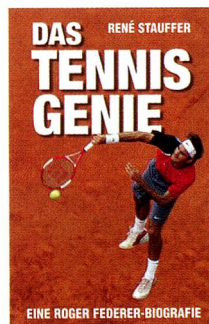
most recently after a memorable battle against Andy Roddick in New York.

"How do you beat a player who doesn't have any weaknesses?" Andy Roddick asked. "He's the most perfect player that ever lived," says John McEnroe. "He's the best I've ever played against," says André Agassi. Talent, mental strength, hard work and discipline have made Roger Federer into a champion. And the media describe Federer the man exclusively in glowing terms: decent,

modest and dependable.

René Stauffer's biography appears fair and genuine, though it would have been nice to learn about Federer's relationship to fellow Swiss tennis stars Martina Hingis and Patty Schnyder. And his heavily-stressed charity work with children in South Africa is somewhat modest for a star who has so far netted 20 million dollars in prize money.

ROLF RIBI



René Stauffer: Das Tennis-Genie. Eine Roger Federer-Biografie. Published by Pendo, Munich and Zurich 2006. 271 pages, CHF 36 / EUR 19.90.