

Address by Swiss Federal President Arnold Koller to the Swiss Abroad, August 1. 1997

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all the magazines stapled, folded, labelled and bundled in record time during a very wet, cold and miserable afternoon - so we chose the perfect day. My congratulations to Rinaldo for issue number one. Only 49 more to go!!

The past week or so has probably been very busy for all Clubs, with many and varied First of August celebrations, which I am sure will have been enjoyed thoroughly.

Now I think my next task should be to introduce myself to the many members who do not know me. I was born in Gisborne, early in 1961 (that's given it away!), the second child of parents who came to New Zealand, together with a six month old baby, just a year earlier. Only two months later, our family moved to the South Waikato, eventually settling in Putaruru, a rural / timber town, about 60 km south of Hamilton. I grew up and did all my schooling there, after which, at the age of 18, I went on my own to Switzerland, originally for a year but eventually staying for eight.

My first job there was in a "Käserei" (cheese factory / shop) in a small town called Ersigen, near Burgdorf (BE), where I was later to live for the following seven years. At the "Käserei", we made three Emmentaler cheeses daily - and I even learnt that well kept secret of how they make all those big holes in the cheese - but, of course, I can't tell you, because it's a secret! I worked in the household, as well as in the shop, where I learnt much about cheese; packed fresh, hand moulded butter; and even achieved a tasty fondue mix. Being in such a small town, no one spoke English, so my Swiss improved very quickly - real total immersion!

Then the travel bug got me, and whilst working as a waitress and in a bakery, I also managed to fit in some travel around Europe, and especially Switzerland. Eventually though, I felt it was time that I should "improve" myself, and very soon after, began a job running the office of a Corrosion Protection firm in Berne. The old saying, "you never stop learning" certainly applied to me and I found the technical side of the job very interesting. I learnt all about rust and how to remove and prevent it. Two particular contracts come to mind - one is the work we did for the

new hotel on the Jungfrauoch, and the other being aluminium pipes we sprayed in the workshop, their destination being the Clyde Dam.

Upon returning to New Zealand in 1987, I had another career change, working for the Bank of New Zealand, in several Hamilton Branches, where I remained until that fateful day of the car accident on 31 July 1994.

Although now back in New Zealand for good, I still have very strong ties to Switzerland and my Swiss heritage; as well as to Swiss culture, customs and traditions. This, together with the Swiss language, is something I feel must be upheld, nurtured, and passed down to the next generation, so that they too are able to identify with where they originate from.

Many people, at this time of year, make trips to Switzerland to visit family and friends, and, of course, to escape at least a part of the winter months, so I wish all those who are yet to depart a good and safe journey. To those people who have already returned, I hope you had an enjoyable stay and welcome you "back home". To everyone else, like myself, I hope spring will be here soon!!

With kindest regards and best wishes,

Beatrice Leuenberger

Address by Swiss Federal President Arnold Koller to the Swiss Abroad, August 1. 1997.

Dear fellow citizens living abroad,

It is good to know that, once a year, Swiss people throughout the world gather to observe our national day. You have come together to honour that beautiful spot on the globe which is our homeland. On the occasion of this year's national day, allow me to pass on to you the greetings and best wishes of the government of which I am a member, and of the Swiss people.

By attending this celebration, you are witnessing to your attachment to our country. We here in Switzerland have the same feeling of attachment to you. All over the world, you act as ambassadors of our country, and I

thank you warmly for this on behalf of the federal government. I know that, from afar, you follow developments in our country with particularly watchful eyes. Consequently, you are familiar with the relatively difficult economic situation that prevails in Switzerland after six years marked by a lack of growth. Like so many others, our country has not been spared a rise in unemployment, and many people have lost their sense of security.

We must fight against this, in the past few years, the government and parliament have carried through extensive reforms of the market and, in doing so, effected a considerable improvement in trade conditions for the Swiss economy. The private sector has, for its part, gone through a process of substantial restructuring and rationalisation. In other words, the conditions for an upswing exist. Given the country's economic strength and our efforts towards renewal, we can face international competition with confidence.

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people are worried. For some months now, our country's image has suffered. Throughout the world people have been led to believe that Switzerland enriched itself during the Second World War and that, in the interest of their own aggrandisement, its banks spent fifty years trying to hold back the assets of victims of the Holocaust.

The government, parliament and the banks have taken the necessary steps towards an objective examination of these accusations. We are resolved and able to confront our history without fear. We are prepared to shed light on the grey areas of our past. But this does not detract from the great merits of those who did service during the war years. Today as in the past, we are deeply grateful for the spirit of resistance and the willingness to make sacrifices displayed by that generation. Both the present economic situation and the confrontation with our nation's history make one thing very clear, the most important response to the challenges of this day and age is solidarity.

Solidarity is necessary to ease any hardship caused by structural change. We also need a renewed kind of solidarity to give Switzerland's humanitarian tradition a new meaning and a new impact throughout the world. This is particularly important for a neutral nation of modest size. For this reason, the federal government has suggested the creation of a "Swiss Solidarity Fund". This foundation is designed to alleviate, with measures appropriate to each specific case, severe human suffering at home and abroad. For many years to come, the foundation shall serve as visible proof of Switzerland's commitment to humanitarian issues.

Let me conclude by casting a glance toward the near future. Next year we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Swiss Confederation. The finest gift the people and the cantons can give themselves is a new Federal Constitution. Work towards that end is progressing well.

The constitutional reform affords us the opportunity to establish, in a candid, open discussion, what it is that gives Switzerland its identity, what holds us together as a nation, and of what we may rightly be proud. One of the features of the draft con-

stitution is its insistence on the responsibility of the federal government for promoting the ties between Swiss nationals living abroad, and between them and their homeland. You may thus continue to rely on our support.

Dear compatriots all over the world, I thank you, wherever you may be, for your loyalty to our country. I wish you an enjoyable and happy celebration, and the best of everything for your own personal future.

YOUR CORNER

Hallo and welcome to the first edition of "Your Corner".

We would like to introduce ourselves, Doris and Trudy, as coordinators of this corner.

This "Corner" is for you the reader!

It could include your favourite recipes, handy hints, penpals, Farewell or Welcome to friends or could reflect any other ideas or suggestions that you may have.

- We would like to invite and encourage your input, so that this corner may be of interest to everyone.

- At our recent A.G.M. weekend in Hamilton we had numerous requests for the following recipe:

Basler Lächerli - typical recipe - honey biscuits from Basel.

- 300 gms honey
- pinch salt
- 250 gms sugar
- 4 Tbsp. water
- 400 gms flour

- 10 drops lemon Ess.
- 200 gms thinly sliced walnut or almonds
- 100 gms mixed peel
- 2 tsp. B. Powder
- 1 tsp. cinnamon - pinch nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. cloves

Topping: 75 gms sugar
3 Tsp. water.

Method:

Melt honey, sugar, salt and water over low heat. Pour into mixing bowl and leave to cool. When almost cold, gradually mix in Ess., cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and baking powder. Next add 2/3 of flour. While kneading dough add remaining flour, nuts and mixed peel. If too moist, add a little more flour. Roll out to approx. 3 mm thick and place on to greased tray. (Cut into squares after baking). Bake at 300 F for 20 to 30 mins. Boil sugar and water till fairly thick. Spread over baking as soon as it comes out of the oven. Cut into squares!

En G u e t e , and we look forward to hearing from you !

(Trudi + Doris).

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