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Please send your contributions for the Helvetia and the Swiss Review to: Lotti Napp, 61 Pembroke Road, Wellington 5.

NEWS FROM THE SWISS CLUBS

Forthcoming events:

AUCKLAND

March 18: Swiss Society Shooting Competition.

TARANAKI SWISS CLUB

Club nights:
First & third Thursday March, April.

WELLINGTON SWISS CLUB

March 11:
Swiss Society Kegeln Competition and Picnic.
April 21:
AGM.

THE WHITBREAD ROUND-THE-WORLD BOAT RACE.

I arrived in Auckland on 19 Jan. in anticipation of great things for the Swiss Day on the Auckland waterfront.

This day was organised by the Auckland Swiss Club as their contribution to the various ethnic performances in honour of the participants in the Whitbread race. A Swiss team led by the skipper Pierre Fehlmann on the maxi boat "Merit" is in the race and officially holds second place behind New Zealand's "Steinlager". Four years earlier Pierre and his crew won the race outright collecting the treasured trophy. They sailed to success on the "UBS Switzerland".

I took a stroll around the quayside to find my bearings around the busy wharves. The harbour looked simply beautiful, blue sky, sunshine, calmness, boats of all shapes and sizes everywhere. A wedding party was boarding a luxury catamaran with a band playing, the bride got carried on board by her husband of a few hours. The scene seemed set for a good day on Saturday.

Saturday 20 Jan. arrived and with it the familiar grey and sultry looking Auckland weather. Disappointing but there is always hope! Down at the harbour some Swiss club members got busy in the late morning hanging the Swiss flag on the wall of the stage and arranging microphones. In the food court some were grilling Swiss sausages and as there was a cool breeze wafting in from the harbour people surely want to warm up with good food.

Exactly at noon the Guggenmusik took the stage. A colourful bunch of about 20 fancy-dressed "Guggen". A tuba, several trumpets, saxophones, drums, and other assorted instruments. The players' heads hidden inside huge papiermache caricatures they looked as if they had come straight from the Basler fastnacht.

The enthusiastic and flamboyant conductor got them playing catchy, wellknown tunes; e.g. It's a long way to Tipperary, Waltzing Mathilda, Yellow submarine, etc. The sound was full with a good beat and despite the rain a huge crowd soon gathered around the stage clapping enthusiastically after every item. Then followed the Alphorn Duo and the Appenzeller musik with children and adults dancing on the stage in Swiss costumes. The Swiss-Kiwi Yodlers put on their usual perfect performance and judging by the applause the crowd was pleased. The crew of "Merit" then lined up on the stage and the ambassador Dr. Michael von Schenck addressed them and the crowd. He praised the crew's performance, mentioning that a crew from a land-locked nation can with courage, determination and good planning find their way around the seven seas. It was also a sign of goodwill and co-operation that the boat was planned from New Zealand designs and built entirely in Switzerland. The ambassador introduced each crew member and described the particular functions he performed. He also congratulated the team on their achievement of winning the race four years ago and now in this race holding the number two position. He wished them every success for the homeward legs, expressing his hopes for them to improve their position to number one.



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The deputy skipper then acted as judge for the best children's costumes. This concluded the swiss performance and, weather permitting would be repeated at seven o'clock in the evening.

I then interviewed the deputy skipper of "Merit", Gerald Rogivue, to find out a few interesting details about the boat, the crew and life on board. Here it is: the boat is a "Maxi" and is the maximum size allowed for this race. It was built by Decision Boat Builders in Morges near Lausanne from epoxy supplied free by Ciba-Geigy and flown by a jumbo airbus to the south of France. The mast (without rigging) was supplied by Alusuisse. The main sponsor is Philipp Morris and Toyota and Fert also supporting. The boat has a crew of 15. Twelve are divided into 3 watches of 4 incl. the watch captain. The skipper, the cook and one reserve work as required. One watch works the boat while the second is on "standby". The third watch sleeps. There are 7 bunks on each side of the boat. All 7 sleep on the higher side of the boat, if the boat tilts the other way they are woken up and told to carry on sleeping in the opposite 7 bunks! The cook is well liked and the crew agrees that they eat better than other crews in the race. "Merit" is the only boat with a freezer and they enjoy fresh meat. Breakfasts consist of toast, butter, cheese, Birchermuesli and three times a week bacon & eggs. Main meals of vegetables, rice, noodles, beef ragout, chicken, and they have on board a convertor that turns seawater into fresh water!



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The skipper, Pierre Fehlmann, is well liked and a good team spirit prevails. Apart from being the leader, he is also a good navigator and is an excellent judge of sea conditions, and he makes sure that every member has particular responsibilities. This seems a good recipe for success!

On behalf of the whole Swiss community from Dunedin in the deep south to Kataia in the far north I wished the crew for their homeward voyage a fresh breeze into the sails, all the luck that Neptune can muster and encouraged them to give those Kiwis a taste of William Tell! And yes, the second performance took place and attracted an even bigger crowd. Thank you Auckland Club, for a grand effort and very fine performance.

Andre Schleicher
President.



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29 Nov. 89 - 28 Dez. 89	17 Jan. 90 - 14 Feb. 90
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