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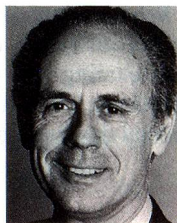
People

Canton Neuchâtel now has a woman in its executive council for the first time. **Monique Dusong**, Social Democrat and up till now member of the Neuchâtel city government, has been elected to the council, together with her party colleague, Francis Matthey, Liberal Democrat Thierry Béguin and two Liberals, Pierre Hirschy and Jean Guinand.



Johannes Matyassy is the new general secretary of the Liberal Democratic Party. This 39-year old economist was previously personal adviser to Federal Councillor Jean-Pascal Delamuraz. He succeeds Christian Kauter, who has headed the party secretariat for almost ten years.

Jacques-Simon Eggly of Geneva is the new president of the Liberal Party of Switzerland (LPS). The 55-year old journalist and teacher follows François Jeanneret. Eggly has been a member of the National Council since 1983 and also belongs to the Council for the Swiss Abroad.



Former world-ranking referee **Kurt Röthlisberger** has been banned for life by UEFA (Union européenne de football association). He is alleged to have told

Grasshoppers of Zurich that he would influence the referee of a Champions League game in exchange for payment. Röthlisberger admits that he discussed

this possibility with people from Zurich, but claims that in reality he had no corrupt intentions.

In December 1996, the two houses of parliament gave the green light for a national exhibition in the year 2001, and since April of this year Switzerland has possessed a 'Madame Expo'. **Jacqueline Fendt**, aged 44, a former top sportswoman and most recently chairwoman of a shipping company, is responsible for preparing the Expo. One of her main jobs is to ignite enthusiasm amongst a population which so far remains sceptical. ■



The sciences in dialogue

Collegium Helveticum, the Forum for Dialogue between the Sciences, has been established in the renovated Sternwarte building at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. The Collegium is headed by Adolf Muschg, writer and professor of literature at the Federal Institute, and its aim is to bring scientists from various disciplines together in an attempt to eliminate barriers between them.

This is a unique venture in Switzerland, and Jakob Nüesch, president of the Federal Institute, pointed out at the opening ceremony that the huge pro-

blems facing humanity today require integration of the natural, engineering, and social sciences and the arts. On the same occasion, Federal Councillor Ruth Dreifuss expressed the hope that dialogue between scientific disciplines would lead to a broadening of knowledge and greater awareness of identity which would be reflected in political decision-making. ■

First of August badge for nature landscapes

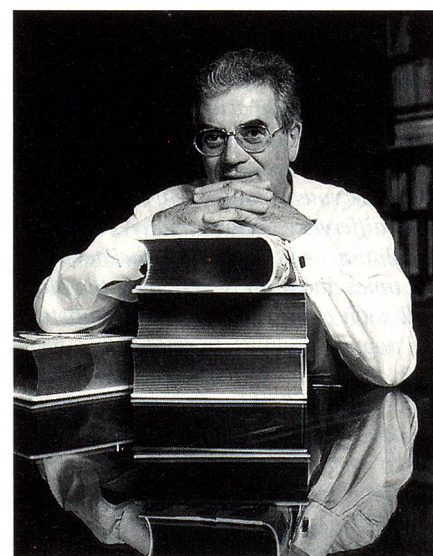
The proceeds of this year's First of August collection by Pro Patria will go to nature landscapes in Switzerland. The campaign will take place in cooperation with the Swiss Landscape Foundation, and the main areas to benefit will be the Canton Vaud Jura Hills Park, the Bolle di Magadino river landscape in Canton Ticino and the Seebachtal nature protection zone in Canton Thurgau. The First of August badge may be obtained from any Swiss embassy or consulate. In the event of difficulty, it can also be ordered directly from Pro Patria, P.O. Box 2678, CH-8023 Zurich; tel: 41 1 251 79 50; fax 41 1 251 75 13. ■



Pro Helvetia: double resignation

After five years at the head of the Swiss cultural foundation, Pro Helvetia, **Urs Frauchiger** is to step down at the end of September. The 61-year old musicologist, cellist and author gives his state of health and other projects as reasons for his decision. His period as director has worn him out, says Frauchiger, stating that the institution with its 35-person Foundation Council is not easy to deal with, in spite of the competence of its members.

The foundation's president, **Rosmarie Simmen**, the Soleure Christian Democrat States Councillor, is also leaving Pro Helvetia at the end of the year. After two periods of office, she is obliged by the foundation's statutes to take this step. Pro Helvetia promotes Swiss art both at home and abroad and is financed out of the federal coffers. In view of the big government deficit, Pro Helvetia is having to take its share of budget cuts. ■



From the coming autumn Urs Frauchiger will no longer run the operations of Pro Helvetia and will spend most of his time on his own writing projects.

Point of view

"We are concerned with the question: 'Are we doing the right things?', while the administration is asking itself: 'Are we doing things right?'"

Contribution by Canton Zurich executive council member Eric Honegger to the much-discussed 'New Public Management'.

Snippets

- In preparation for telecommunications liberalisation on January 1, 1998, Telecom PTT will appear on the market as Swisscom from October 1 of this year. From the middle of 1998, Swisscom will become a private corporation and will be completely separate from the postal service.

- In the wake of S Plus and Schweiz 4, there is no longer to be a fourth national television network with its own programme organisation. At the request of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, the Federal Council has decided that the fourth network should be used to supplement the main programmes of the three language regions. It will continue to be used for sports transmissions.

- The concentration process on health grounds continues in Switzerland's press. From the beginning of June, ten newspapers from the cantons of Grisons, Glarus, St. Gall and Schwyz are appearing under the name 'Die Südostschweiz' (South-East Switzerland) – although five also retain their own names. All the papers have the same main news, but with differing regional pages. Total circulation is about 110,000.

- Between 1991 and 1996, Swiss banks lost a good Sfr. 42 billion in their domestic lending business. 8.5% of loans granted during this period bounced. Three-quarters of the losses hit the big banks. According to the Federal Banking Commission, the bad business was mainly due to the expansionist and in many cases unwise credit policies carried out during the 1980 boom years.

- Lausanne's military laundry service, which was set up during the First World War, is closing shop. This social institution has provided soldiers with free laundry. Its services were in particularly high demand during periods of active service, and they were also greatly appreciated by those many Swiss Abroad who attended recruiting school on a voluntary basis. ■

Texts: René Lenzin
Photos: Keystone

Rolf Bloch to head the Holocaust Fund



Rolf Bloch, chairman of the Holocaust Fund.

The seven-figure executive committee of the Special Fund for Needy Victims of the Holocaust/Shoa has been set up. The chairman is Rolf Bloch, president of the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities, and members are former National Councillor and States Councillor Josi Meier, former Basle Rural High Court President René Bacher, former Geneva executive council member Bernard Ziegler, former Israeli government minister Josef Burg and Israeli member of parliament Abraham Hirschson. Nobel Prize laureate Elie Wiesel was originally appointed as the seventh member, but he did not feel able to assume the task. His successor is Edgar Bronfmann. Contributions to the fund – amounting to at least Sfr. 260 million – will come from the

private sector. Swiss voters will perhaps have the last word on a contribution from the National Bank to the tune of Sfr. 100 million, since a parliamentary resolution to this effect may well be the subject of a referendum demand.

The Federal Council has presented a model structure for the Foundation for Solidarity, which will be independent of the Assistance Fund. Two working groups are at present examining how the resources available may best be used both within Switzerland and abroad and how the foundation's assets – stemming from the National Bank's gold reserves – can be managed without loss of the principal. Since it will require a constitutional amendment, people and cantons will also have to approve the creation of the foundation in a referendum. ■

Speleologists' Congress



The 12th International Congress of Speleologists will take place in La Chaux-de-Fonds on August 10–17. About 2,000 participants are expected at this event, which takes place every four years. Lectures, exhibitions, excursions and an audio-visual festival will be amongst the main features of the congress. Further information may be obtained from:

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(Picture: The Beatus caves) ■