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CH with Heart

The CH with Heart Programme was launched on August 1. In the present sombre atmosphere, this aims to be a positive beacon which will awake a new feeling of solidarity and form a reminder of Switzerland's humanitarian tradition. The brain-child of National Councillor François Loeb, the programme is a combined effort by various bodies, including the Swiss Red Cross, the Federation of Evangelical Churches, the Conference of Bishops, the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities, Pro Juventute, Pro Patria, the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad and the Federation of Swiss Women's Organisations. The programme is supported by a 'heart postcard' calling for solidarity in all four national languages, which is to be distributed as widely as possible. ■

Point of view

"Not everything risked succeeds. But everything which succeeds was once risked."

Federal Councillor Kaspar Villiger's appeal for entrepreneurial spirit and readiness to take risks.

A slap in the face by some banks

In an international advertising campaign, the Swiss Bankers' Association has published a list of unclaimed accounts belonging to foreign customers which have not been touched since May 9, 1945. They represent an equivalent of about Sfr. 60 million. This step by the banks, which has long been called for, has been widely welcomed, but it nevertheless gave occasion for severe criticism.

The new open attitude of the Swiss Bankers' Association has been overshadowed by carelessness on the part of some banks, which neglected to check the list in detail. The result is that it contains names of people who could easily have been traced at very little cost. Georg Kray, the president of the association, expressed shame on behalf of the banks in question and said he did not know where to look for a fig leaf big enough to hide the slipshod behaviour of some of his colleagues. Zurich's prestigious daily, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, which is usually more reserved

talked of "a slap in the face for the whole of Switzerland" due to the sloppy behaviour of these banks.

The generally inefficient way in which the disclosure of the list was orchestrated is only the latest in a series of omissions and misjudgements by banks in connection with the unclaimed assets, and it diminishes the credibility of Switzerland as a financial centre yet further. It also has the effect of pushing into the background positive events and decisions, which would otherwise have done much to reduce the harm to Switzerland's image which has been done over the last few months. In the hurly-burly, the fact has been largely ignored that the Holocaust Fund set up by the private sector has already released Sfr. 17 million to "the neediest of the needy". In addition, the first interim report of the Independent Commission of Experts Switzerland – Second World War has been virtually swept under the carpet. ■

Horse-fair centenary



In August the centenary of the National Horse Fair was celebrated in Saignelégier in the Franches Montagnes with hot summer temperatures and 60,000 visitors attending. Many prominent figures travelled to Switzerland's newest canton – Jura – for the jubilee, chief among them President of the Confederation Arnold Koller. All 26 cantons took part in a folklore procession, and horse enthusiasts got their money's worth in every respect. ■

New financial services giant

Credit Suisse Group has swallowed up Winterthur insurance. The takeover is in the form of an exchange of shares and will lead to the creation of an international leader amongst financial services companies. Total assets of some Sfr. 700 billion, equity of about Sfr. 23 billion and market capitalisation of about Sfr. 50 billion will make the new group one of the ten biggest in the world. In contrast to other mergers, this link-up will result in the loss of 'only' 500 jobs, which should be more than offset in the short term by the growth opportunities open to the new giant.

Most analysts think the merger makes good sense and bears high promise since the services provided by banks and insurance companies have gradually been converging in any case. One-stop financial services is the name of the game. The merger came in the wake of a previous agreement by which the two groups had been working together for the past year. ■

People



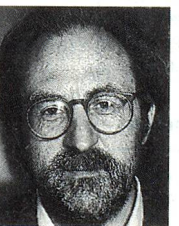
Corps Commander and Colonel **Jean-Rodolphe Christen** has died at the age of 63. He was head of army training from 1992 to 1996 and was the main advocate of a leadership style oriented towards the individual, according to the motto 'Communicate not command'.



Not yet 20 and already a world medalist: Berne's **Anita Weyermann** gained a bronze in the 1,500 metres at the light athletics world championships in Athens. The 19-year old gymnast was the only Swiss medal winner in Athens and also the first since 1993, when Werner Günthör won a gold in putting the shot.



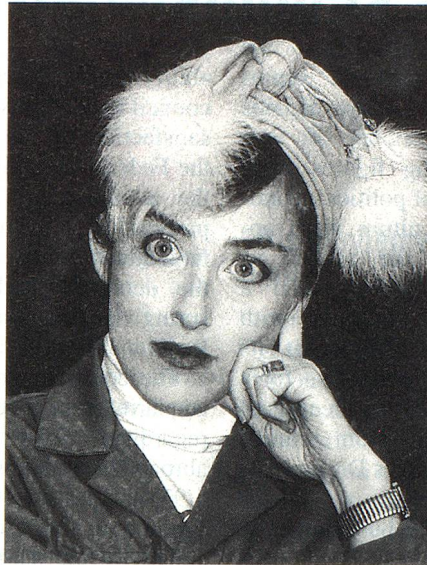
Photographer **Bruno P. Zehnder** died during the harsh Antarctic winter surrounded by 'his' penguins. For nearly 20 years this 52-year old from eastern Switzerland was committed to keeping Antarctica intact as a habitat for penguins. His penguin photos have been exhibited on many occasions and purchased by famous museums.



For the first time since racist statements were made into a crime, a Swiss court has handed down a firm prison sentence. Animal rights activist **Erwin Kessler** has been condemned to two months in prison for comparing the Jewish way of slaughtering animals with the Holocaust. Kessler refuses to withdraw the comparison and intends to appeal against the judgement right up to the European Court of Human Rights.

Texts: René Lenzin
Photos: Keystone

Pipilotti Rist to create Expo 2001



She was once at the heart of the women's band 'Les Reines Prochaines'. The development of video art in Switzerland is closely linked with her name.

Her work will be on show this autumn at New York's Guggenheim Museum and at San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art. While well on the way to joining the Olympians of the international art scene, Pipilotti Rist has been entrusted with artistic responsibility for Expo 2001.

The surprising choice of the 35-year old St. Gall artist was announced on August 1. It was the basic concept of the Expo and the team already assembled that led her to accept the job, says Pipilotti Rist on her decision. She goes on: "The idea that we will be dealing with psychological, philosophical and political subjects in a way which is to be at the same time poetic, sensuous, wild, light-hearted and generous is an inspiration to me."

Information about the content and shape of Expo 2001 may be obtained from: Expo 2001, Place de la Gare 4, CH-2002 Neuchâtel, or on the Internet at <http://www.expo2001.ch>

Snippets

Echo of Switzerland. The wireless age started in Switzerland on October 22, 1922, with the words spoken in French "This is Lausanne radio telephone station". The 75 years of Switzerland's radio history were reflected and illustrated by special exhibitions held in Schwyz and Montreux.

Good wages for hard work. In comparison with other OECD countries, Swiss teaching staff work the most hours and get the best wages. In terms of actual teaching workload and adjusted for purchasing power, however, while salaries are still above the OECD average they descend to 'only' fourth place for

primary schools and sixth place for secondary level I.

'MiGlobi'. Surprise in the retail trade. Migros, Switzerland's number one in the field has taken a majority shareholding in traditional chain store Globus, to which ABM, Interio and Office World also belong. Top management of both say they are not considering merger, but there is talk of a closing of ranks. Sales by the new giant should amount to Sfr. 18 billion.

Community service sought after. In the nine months since the Federal Law on Alternative Community Service came into force, 1,844 applications have been received. Of these 500 have been processed, with 444 applicants being admitted to community service – which lasts one and a half times as long as the rejected military service.

2,400,000.000. Direct payments by the federal government to agriculture amounted to Sfr. 2.4 billion in 1996, or Sfr. 475 million more than the year before. The increase is due to a strong rise in ecology surpluses. 54% of all farms now work along integrated production lines, while over 5% are recognised as bio-agricultural operators.

Carla Ferrari Director of SRI

The new director of Swiss Radio International is Carla Ferrari. The 48-year old Ticino television journalist succeeds Ulrich Kündig, due to retire at the end of November. Until the end of June of this year, Carla Ferrari was responsible for the fourth Swiss television channel, which in September changed its function to broadcast supplementary programmes for the regional language network.