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People

42-year-old Task Force Head **Thomas Borer** has been appointed Swiss Ambassador in Berlin. His predecessor Dieter Chenaux-Repond retires at the end of July. The Task Force on Switzerland in the Second World War has been dissolved. The Federal Council set up the Task Force in October 1996 at the height of the controversy over Switzerland's role in the Second World War.



Zurich theatre personality **Felix Rellstab** is dead. He passed away at his desk at the age of 74. As recently as this winter he was still appearing on stage. For over 30 years, since 1960, he was in charge of students and staff at Zurich's Academy of Performing Arts.

Much-loved TV moderator **Wysel Gyr** has exited the stage of life at the age of 71. He made a name for himself as a moderator of folklore programmes with titles like "Für Stadt und Land", "Öisi Musig" and "Diräkt us...".

Zurich architect, publicist and teacher **Alfred Roth** has died at the age of 95. He was influenced by Le Corbusier and Marcel Breuer and was also much in demand abroad as a lecturer and author.



Theodor Gut, former FDP National Councillor and publisher/editor-in-chief of the "Zürichsee-Zeitung", has died at the age of 82. He studied law but joined the newspaper business as an editor in 1948 and became editor-in-chief in 1953.

Initially 54-year-old CVP National Councillor **Remigio Ratti** aimed to become a Federal Councillor. Instead, the professor of economics at Fribourg University and Director of the Institute of Economic Research in Lugano has been appointed Director of Ticino Radio and TV.



The richest man in Switzerland is dead: musical patron and director **Paul Sacher** has died in Basle at the age of 93. Through his marriage with Maja Hoffmann-Stehlin he became a member of the board and co-owner of chemical giant Hoffmann-La Roche. This allowed him to devote himself to the field of art and to the sponsorship of artists around the world.

A non-pilot at the head of the air force: 2-star general **Hansrudolf Fehrlin** has been appointed to succeed

Snippets

Self-employed: More and more people in Switzerland are founding their own businesses. Self-employment is being taken up primarily by women, partly due to economic necessity i.e. a lack of adequately-paid family-friendly jobs. With 15% of the workforce working for themselves, Switzerland is above the European average.

Farewell gift: The National Association of Independents and the Migros Cooperative Society are to part ways. The party, which has an electoral following of 1.8% and three seats on the National Council, received a dowry of CHF 2 million to find another partner. Formerly Migros supported the party to the tune of at least half a million Swiss francs a year.

One-fifth foreigners: At around 7.115 million, Switzerland's permanent population has grown by only 0.3%. In 1998 20.9% of residents were foreigners and 80,100 children were born.

More TV: The Federal Council has granted a licence to TA-Media AG for a full TV programme, TV3, and to RTL and Pro7 for a programme window. This increases the number of TV channels broadcasting to the small German-Swiss public.

Sluggish economy: In 1998 the Swiss economy grew by 2.1%. Experts are forecasting a growth rate of only 1-1.5% for 1999.

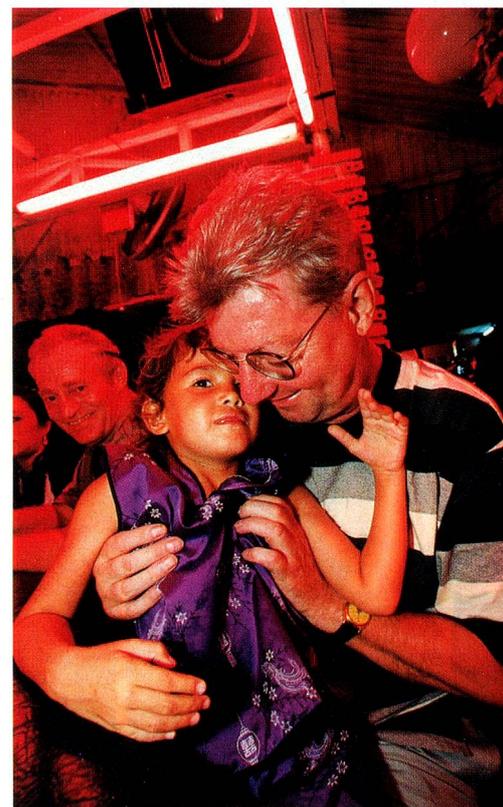
New newspaper for Zurich: Norwegian publishing house Schibsted plans to launch a free morning paper for commuters. The new paper, entitled "20 Minuten", is scheduled for launch in August. The Norwegian publicly-quoted company with sales of CHF 1.4 billion and 4000 employees is active in the fields of daily newspapers, TV and internet.

Berne-North Pole and back: A Twike crew from Berne crossed 14 countries within two months, covering a distance of 11 500 kilometres. The innovative two-seater electric car runs on energy and muscle power.

Safe sex: Condoms produced in Switzerland are regarded as the most reliable in the world. For the past ten years they have been awarded the seal of quality by the Empa testing centre in St. Gallen. The Federal Office of Health's world-acclaimed Stop Aids campaign, that uses words and pictures to address different target groups, has lasted even longer. Sales of preservatives have more than doubled since 1986. ■

Sex for cash

Some children in Switzerland are not only being sexually abused but also commercially exploited by a handful of adults. These are the findings of a study



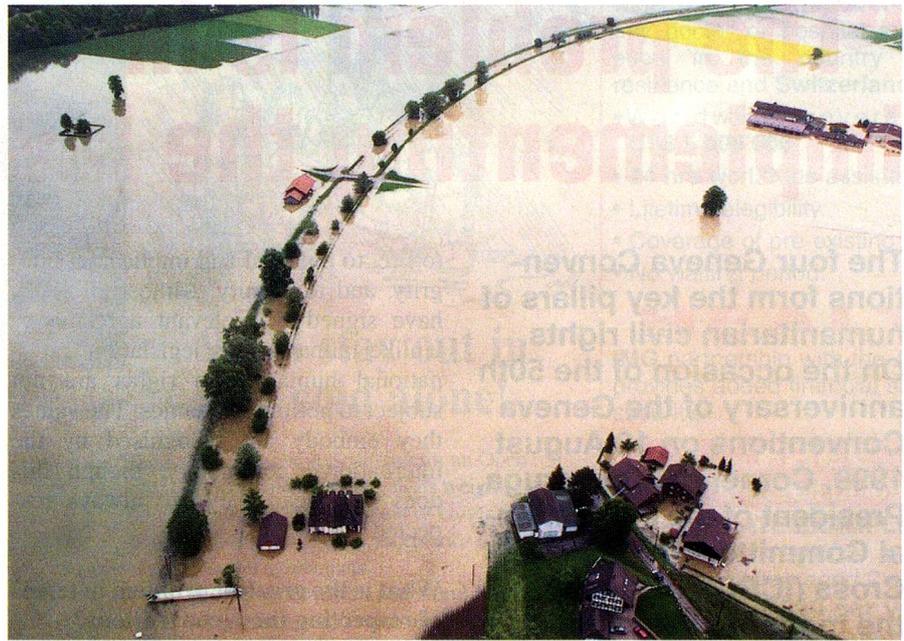
Fernand Carrel, who is retiring. Carrel made the headlines among other things because he flew too often. Fehr- lin cannot fly: he was a secondary school teacher before becoming a ca- reer officer in 1968.

The "Glückskette" charity organisation has a new director: **Felix Bollmann**, currently on the management team of SRG SSR's *idée suisse*, succeeds Jean Martel of Geneva.

Christa Löpfe has been appointed new editor-in-chief of the women's maga- zine "annabelle", replacing Hamburg- born Angela Oelckers.

Changes, too, at the tabloid "Blick": **Jürg Lehmann**, former deputy editor- in-chief of the "Berner Zeitung", takes over as editor-in-chief from Wolfram Meister. Editors-in-chief at the "Blick" occupy shaky thrones: most last no longer than two years. ■

Floods of the century



Mild temperatures in May, lots of rain and the melting of the snowfalls of the century led to pre- carious conditions in many parts of Switzerland.

The avalanches of Switzerland's re- cord-breaking winter were followed three months later by flooding. Shortly before Ascension enormous volumes of water poured into rivers and lakes from many of Switzerland's alpine valleys. At the same time there were several days of heavy rainfall. Large regions of Switzerland stood under water. Lake Thoune burst its banks and rose to 558.73 meters, an all-time century re- cord. In places like Berne, Rheinfelden and Aarau fire services and civil de- fence personnel worked non-stop to pump out cellars, storage rooms, lift shafts and ground-floor restaurants, businesses and apartments. Residents of

many lakeshore and riverside houses had to be evacuated. Sandbags were not enough to stem the flow of the Aare, Rhine and Thur.

Landslides paralysed parts of the road and rail network. Wood debris and uprooted trees threatened to block up or damage weirs. The waters of the Thur increased twelvefold, and its dams as well as other dams burst. Trees were uprooted, pedestrian walkways swept away. Rivers contaminated water sup- plies, flooded agricultural land and swept away crops. Farmers were forced to evacuate their cattle and Berne's Dählhölzli Zoological Gardens had to evacuate its animals. Open-air pools were turned into lakes, occupied by water fowl rather than bathers. Many homes had no electricity or telephone lines. The damage is likely to amount to several million francs. ■

commissioned by the working group on commercial sexual exploitation of minors.

The research duo Stefan Studer and Christina Peter spoke to various victims, authorities, counselling centres and care organisations. The cases docu- ment a broad spectrum of violence: fathers who rape their daughters and pay them for it; mothers, stepfathers and relatives who sell their children to the highest bidder; small children abused for the purpose of pornographic films; girls in brothels who are treated like slaves.

Unlike Thailand or Brazil, child abuse in Switzerland takes place in the semi-private or private sphere. The cases concern girls and boys in all lin- guistic regions, in town and country, and in Swiss and non-Swiss families.

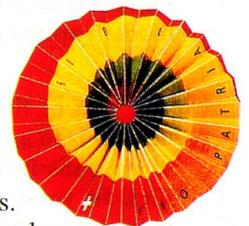
The impact of commercial sexual ex- ploitation is catastrophic for all victims. According to the study, in many cases the victim's health is severely affected, they run an extremely high risk of Aids, and many turn to drugs or develop psychological problems. ■

Pro Patria lantern pins

Normally the colourful lanterns are used to festoon balconies and trees on Swiss National Day (1 August), but now they are available as wearable de-

corations. These bright- ly-coloured emblems of the Swiss Pro Patria Foundation were de- signed by Viktor Stampfli as lapel pins.

The proceeds from the sale of this year's 1st August symbol will go to three key cultural embodiments of the industrial age: the restoration of the Bourbaki panorama in Lucerne, the steamship "Montreux" on Lake Gene- va, and a historic Pullman wagon owned by the Rhätische Bahn. ■



Point of View

"We have false preconceptions of age. Age has nothing to do with whether you are 50, 60 or 70, but with whether or not you are still expecting something of life."

Emilie Lieberherr, former State Councillor and Civic Councillor in Zurich for 24 years

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Photos: Keystone