

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 26 (1999)
Heft: 4-5

Rubrik: Mosaic

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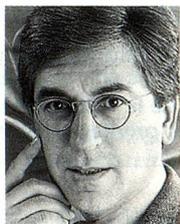
People

Cabaret artist, actress and dramatist **Elsie Attenhofer** has died at the age of 90. From 1934 to 1942 she was a member of the legendary cabaret "Cornichon". She also appeared for many decades in Swiss films.



Clown Monti is dead. The Aargau Circus of the same name is grieving for its founder and manager Guido Muntwyler (the artist's real name), who died at the age of 67 while on tour.

Marco Hartmann is retiring from the Swiss Tourist Board after just on five years at its helm. The 48-year-old is to take over as operational head of Swiss company Hapimag.



Instead of Ambassador to India, Winterthur's **Franz von Däniken** is to become the new State Secretary. The priorities of Jakob Kellenberger's successor are the EU, UNO, the Balkans and the USA.



Passenger ship's new berth: The motorboat "Jungfrau", which has been plying Lake Thun for 44 years, has enjoyed a second maiden voyage on Lake Brienz, following a complete technical overhaul and a new coat of paint featuring picturesque folklore motifs. With the lakeside communities contributing CHF 1 million to the boat's restoration and the canton bearing CHF 1.5 million of the costs, this left the ship's operator BLS only CHF 1 million to pay.

Snippets

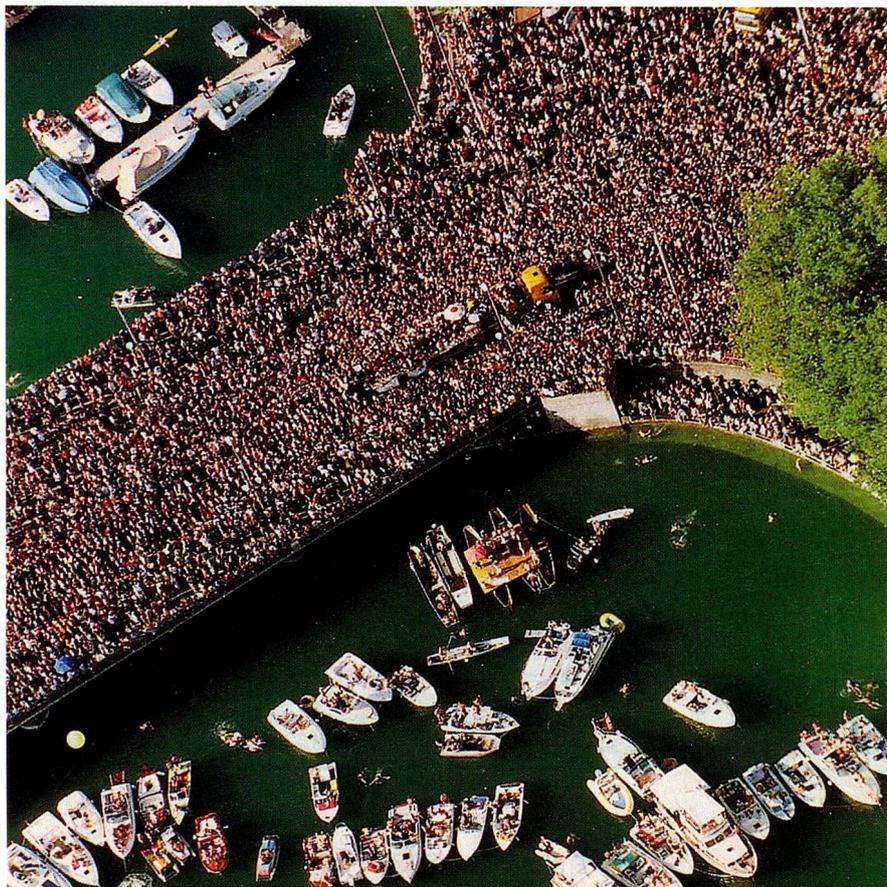
Free newspaper closes down: Free Zurich newspaper "Züri Woche" has closed. Founded 17 years ago and with a circulation of 250 000, the loss-making newspaper was 50% owned by car importer Walter Frey, 35% by the Basle Media Group, and 15% by food magnate Beat Curti.

Swissair abroad: Switzerland's national airline is merging its management with that of Belgian airline Sabena and transferring many of its operations to Belgium. As part of its CHF 240 million cost-cutting package, Swissair is shedding 500 to 600 jobs worldwide. The airline has also allied itself with American Airlines for its American business.

Female drinking on the rise: Compared with other countries, Switzerland has one of the highest rates of women with alcohol-related problems. Throughout Europe higher-educated women drink more than those with fewer qualifications. Men still like their tipples, but a quarter to one third of the alcohol consumed in Europe goes down female throats.

Schnapps from beer: Swiss company Wädi-Brau-Huus AG has designed a beer brand for fans of spirits. Until now, Swiss distilleries were not allowed to produce spirits from cereal and beer. But in July 1999 the liberalised alcohol law comes into force, lifting the protection on Swiss distillers of spirits made from stone fruits and pomaceous fruits.

Dancing birds of paradise in Zurich and Geneva



Between 500 000 and 600 000 people made Switzerland's financial metropolis pulsate with rhythm on 7 August. Visitors from all over Europe flocked to the ear-splitting Zurich Street Parade, the second largest techno event after the Berlin Love Parade. The deafening procession with 29 loudspeaker floats lasted five hours. Ravers vied to outdo each other with outrageous coloured hair, skimpy costumes in leather, latex and sequins, makeup, tattoos and lots of naked flesh. The official parade heralded a night of music and dancing, and when the last techno beat fell silent in the early hours of dawn, 32 tonnes of garbage had accumulated. This year's demonstration for "love, peace and tolerance" passed without any major incidents. Around 230 people had to be treated for circulatory problems, hyperventilation, overheating or falls.

A week prior to this it was Geneva's turn for techno music. The Lake Parade with its 26 floats proceeded through the city at a snail's pace, dominated by 400 000 raving "birds of paradise".

Germans fly with Swiss: The Sair Group has purchased a 49.9 percent stake in major German charter airline LTU. With its fleet of 28 aircraft, LTU transports over 7 million passengers a year.

Major European company: Algroup, the Swiss aluminium and chemical group, has merged with the diversified German group Viag, raising the overall revenue from packaging, aluminium and chemicals to CHF 53 billion. The 127,000-strong workforce is to be downsized by 2500.

Milk merger: In response to the planned market liberalisation on 1 May 1999, industrial milk processors Toni AG of Ostermundigen and Sântis AG of Gossau have merged to form the new dairy giant Swiss Dairy Food. This will result in the shedding of 300 jobs or around 10 percent of the workforce.

Contaminated blood: The criminal court in Geneva has handed down a 12-month suspended sentence to Alfred Hässig, the 77-year-old former director of the Central Laboratory of the Swiss Red Cross. Hässig was found guilty of endangering life by knowingly marketing untested blood products and exposing haemophiliacs to the HIV virus.

Crissier for gourmets: Two years after the departure of Fredy Girardet, Crissier still boasts a top chef. Philippe Rochat has been nominated 1999 Chef of the Year by the Gault-Millau gourmet guide.

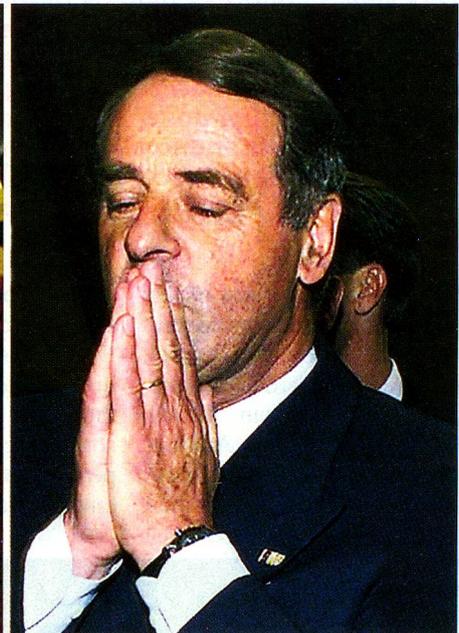
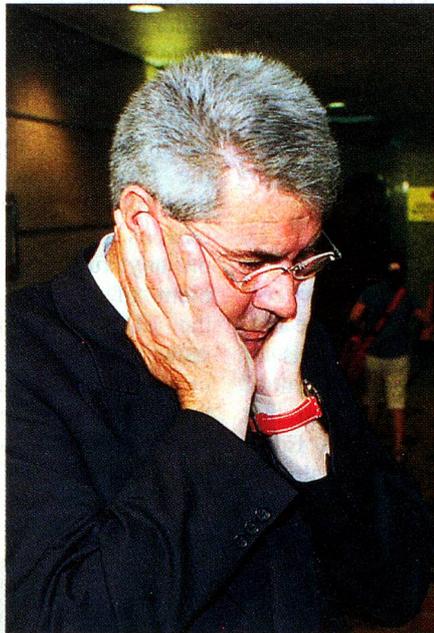
Money for Luxor victims: One year after the attack at Luxor, 22 Zurich residents have received compensation amounting to CHF 700,000. The terrorist attack claimed the lives of 36 Swiss nationals. ■

Point of view

"The world apparently does not see us the way we do. The tendency to believe that our inner view is the same as our external image and be deeply hurt when this proves an over-estimation, has almost become a Swiss characteristic."

Peter Haerle, Journalist, on the vote against Sion 2006

Sion 2006: Shock, rage and disappointment



Total disillusionment: Jean-Daniel Mudry, General Director of the Candidates Committee, and Federal Councillor Adof Ogi.

Frenzied celebrations turn to floods of tears: the 2006 Winter Olympics will not be held in Switzerland.

Federal Councillor Adolf Ogi left no stone unturned to promote Sion 2006. He promoted the campaign on TV, wrote a column in the tabloid "Blick", made use of his contacts in the world of international sport, and forced parliament to grant tax concessions to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Three quarters of the nation and a hefty proportion of Swiss industry backed the campaign and were swept along by the Federal Council's euphoria. The prospect of recognition from abroad mobilised countless resources and inspired ideas of ways to enhance Switzerland's reputation.

But the IOC showed little consideration for all these efforts. Instead it preferred to place more weight on the shadows cast by the Nazi Gold affair, Swiss business dealings in South Africa during apartheid, and Switzerland's distancing from Europe and fence-sitting on issues that demanded answers despite neutrality, rather than on a meticulously designed dossier and a perfect presentation in Seoul. The 53 votes for surprised winner Turin and only 36 votes for

a shocked Sion sent out an unequivocal message.

Slap in the face for Switzerland

The decision to award the Winter Olympics to Turin unleashed a floodtide of dismay and anger in the Valais and the rest of Switzerland. There was speculation that the IOC's decision was intended to punish the Candidates' Committee and IOC member Marc Hodler's uncovering of the bribery scandal in Salt Lake City at the end of 1998, when IOC members were accused of corruption and forced to resign. Moreover, insider sources claimed that the Italian delegation led by Fiat owner Giovanni Agnelli turned on enormous pressure during the last few days of the candidature and brought long-resolved stains on the Swiss character back into the spotlight.

Federal Councillor Ogi publicly questioned whether our country had any more political credibility on the international stage, and concluded by calling on the country to find a new challenge and not be dragged down by doom-and-gloom thinking. ■

Texts: Alice Baumann

Photos: Keystone