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People

Internationally-known German-Swiss filmmaker **Daniel Schmid**, famous for such films as "Il bacio di Tosca" and "Jenatsch", was awarded the Leopard of Honour at this year's Locarno Film Festival. Another reason for celebration was the premiere of his film "Beresina oder Die letzten Tage der Schweiz", a wicked and satirical farce about Switzerland and its military myths.



The most heavily-guarded women in Switzerland, Federal Prosecutor **Carla Del Ponte**, has been appointed Chief UN Prosecutor against war criminals in the Hague. Switzerland's neutrality contributed to the unanimous vote for this resolute crime-fighter.

The head of Switzerland's Secret Service **Peter Regli** was suspended from office following revelations that Dino Bellasi, a former employee of the Military Department (now the VBS), was suspected of embezzling CHF 8.9 million from the national purse since 1984. Whether the purpose was to finance his private lifestyle or, as has been suggested, run an arms dealing operation, is the subject of current

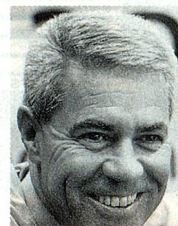
investigation. Arms and ammunition were found in a warehouse rented by Bellasi. Responding to the crisis, Federal Councillor Adolf Ogi promised "Glasnost in the Pentagon".

39-year-old Zurich corporate lawyer **Urs Rohner** has been appointed Chairman of the German private TV channel ProSieben AG of Munich.

The new director of the Swiss Tourist Board is not an internal candidate but a software specialist, **Jürg Schmid**. His aim is to create a prominent Internet presence for our country.



Zurich football **Fredy Bickel** is dead. Until his death at the age of 81 Bickel is said to have remembered every move of his 1000 appearances for Grasshoppers Club GC and his 71 national games. His legendary wing attacks and accurate goals – 202 for GC alone – made him world-famous.



Chemical engineer, former professional soldier and ex-General Director of the Sion 2006 Olympic Candidature Committee **Jean-Daniel Mudry** has succeeded Josef Zenhäusern as the new head of the Swiss Ski Association.

Michel Crippa was summarily dismissed from his post as director of the Swiss Utility Vehicle Association ASTAG after running up private debts to the tune of CHF 1.2 million. He also had to give up his post as president of the Swiss Officers' Society. Now the former member of the general directorate of Swiss Federal Railways has died at the age of 62.

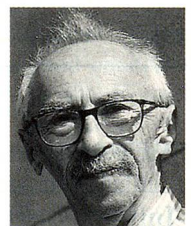
The "escape king" is dead: 57-year-old **Walter Stürm** of eastern Switzerland took his own life in Thurgau's cantonal prison, where he was detained on suspicion of bank robbery. Stürm has been a thorn in the side of Swiss justice for more than 30 years and escaped from prison eight times. His farewell note just before Easter 1984 has passed into legend: "Gone egg-hunting".



Friedrich Steinfels, long-time head of the former Steinfels soap factory in Zurich, has died at the grand old age of 104.

Basle architect **Marcus Diener** has died at the age of 81. Together with his son he ran "Diener & Diener", one of the most successful architect bureaus in Switzerland. Among his most recent projects were the rebuilding of the Swiss Embassy in Berlin and the Swiss Pavilion for the Frankfurt Book Fair.

In Vienna, Swiss ethno-psychologist **Paul Parin** received the international Sigmund Freud Prize for psychotherapy.



Theologist and architect **Hans Roth** has died in Zurich. A former Jesuit, Roth worked for 27 years in the hinterland of Bolivia, where he restored baroque Indian churches.

Peter Sigrist, long-running CEO and delegate to the board of the Basle Media Group, has abruptly left the company. His successor is **Beat Meyer**. ■

Better image abroad



For five days around 100 members and 18 dogs of the Swiss Disaster Relief unit provided search and rescue assistance in Izmit, the epicentre of the recent devastating earthquake in Turkey. They managed to rescue twelve people alive and recover 80 bodies from the wreckage. Foreign Minister Joseph Deiss called the rescue chain "a symbol of a humanitarian Switzerland that is open to the world".

At the same time Deiss proposed the setting up of a committee to strengthen and revamp Switzerland's image abroad, earmarking CHF 14 million instead of the mere CHF 2.4 million formerly allocated. ■

Texts: Alice Baumann

Photos: Keystone, Jean-Jacques Ruchti

Snippets

Bourbaki Panorama: The new Bourbaki building is scheduled to open in Lucerne at the end of January 2000. Its most important exhibit is the 18,000 m² Bourbaki panorama by Geneva artist Edouard Castres, featuring 10,000 figures and depicting a scene from the Franco-German War in the winter of 1871 (see *Swiss Review* 2/96). The museum will also house cinemas, a library and a restaurant.

A night in jail: Lucerne has another attraction to offer. The city's former central prison has been turned into an adventure hotel with 216 beds in 70 cells.

Alusuisse marriage: After 111 years Alusuisse, already allied with Lonza, is to be merged with Alcan of Canada and Pechiney of France. The new company has been given the provisional name of APA and will be the world's largest aluminium manufacturer and a leading provider of packaging products.

Crisis at Sulzer: Sulzer, the international Winterthur-based technology group, has announced 2000 job cuts in the industrial area, half of them in Switzerland. The move affects almost every seventh employee in Switzerland. The group claims this measure will cut costs by CHF 100 million a year.

Fewer and fewer jobs: Sulzer is not the only one. In 1991 alone 158,000 jobs were shed in the industrial sector. The construction and machine industries were most affected by automation.

Ceramics sold: Spanish sanitary products manufacturer Compania Roca Radios SA has purchased ceramics company Keramik Laufen Holding for CHF 420 million. The merger creates the world's second largest maker of porcelain sanitary products.

Shoes off: Oerlikon-Bührle Holding has sold shoe manufacturer Bally to the US investment company Texas Pacific Group. Market analysts estimate a purchase price of CHF 200–300 million.

Vegetarians food-poisoned: Two dozen people suffered from food poisoning at the European Vegetarians Convention in Widnau/SG. All were hospitalised. The culprit was uncooked beans. ■

Flash flood drownings, storm deaths

Two heavy storms with high winds brought death and destruction to Switzerland. At the end of July 21 young tourists were killed on a canyoning expedition in the Saxet River. And at the beginning of August three Swiss sportsmen died in a storm.

The canyoning group, consisting of three guides and eighteen tourists aged between 19 and 32 from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the UK and Switzerland, was caught unawares by a heavy storm in the Saxet gorge above Interlaken. Within a very short space of time the waters of the Saxet swelled to a raging torrent. Local residents had warned the tour guides of the approaching storm. Investigations into the cause and responsibility have led to criminal proceedings: eleven members of Adventure World, the expedition organiser, have been accused of involuntary manslaughter.

After much deliberation the Federal Council has now decided against introducing new legislation on "outdoor adventure activities and high-risk or extreme sports", but standardised guidelines are to be drawn up governing the qualifications of tour guides. One fact remains: since the accident in the Bernese Oberland, the number of people taking part in adventure activities has halved.

On the first weekend of August a motorised paraglider crashed in the French-speaking Jura. The same storm claimed two victims on the upper reaches of Lake Zurich. Massive damage to boats and piers was reported on many lakes. On one campsite tents were ripped asunder, and their inhabi-



tants, a scout troop, had to be evacuated. In Ferenbalm/BE a strong wind ripped a marquee from its pegs and blew it into the path of an oncoming TGV train. In Aarburg a high wind tore the 130 m² large metal facade off a building. The worst winds were recorded in Changins (VD) at 122 kilometers an hour. Lightning crippled the public transport system, and heavy rains caused widespread water damage. Cultural events like the Vintner Festival in Vevey, rock star Johnny Halliday's open air concert in Geneva, and the film show on Locarno's Piazza Grande had to be cancelled or postponed. ■

Still no solution in sight for Expo

Expo.01 continues to be beset by difficulties. The earliest opening date is now 2002, if it takes place at all. Massive financial problems led to intervention by the Federal Council and further resignations. Expo Director Jacqueline Fendt was forced to quit, and Chief of Staff André von Moos left his post after only two months in office. The Strategic Committee headed by Francis Matthey and Elisabeth Zölch was deprived of its powers. Marketing head Aloys Hirzel, press spokesman Franz Egle and financial director Rudolf Burkhalter resigned due to excessive workload. TV moderator Kurt Aeschbacher gave up his post

as chairman of the jury. Now National Councillor and FDP President Franz Steinegger (Uri) has been appointed as government delegate to the Expo steering committee. ■

Point of View

"I have no desire to enter politics, because to do so one needs to join a political party. And as soon as you are a member of a party, you are obliged to reject good ideas from an opposing camp."

Bertrand Piccard, balloonist and psychiatrist