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Autor: Küffer, Manuel
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Future perspectives of "swissinfo.org"

The www.swissinfo.org site is continually being expanded.

Expanded Italian and Spanish sites have recently gone on-line, and a number of news and information programmes by the various SRG SSR idée suisse radio and TV stations can already be called up on the Web. Following a minor face-lift, the "swissinfo pages" are now appearing in their new design.

One of this year's milestones will be the creation of person-

alised services, allowing users to compile their individual "swissinfo page" according to their taste. The screen displays only the information and news in which the user is interested. Mail services, allowing users to send their messages by e-mail, are also planned for this year. This service is also much in demand by Swiss who are resident or travelling abroad.

Navigation tool

A geographical information system will also be launched in the near

future, for on-line cartographical display of every address in Switzerland. The applications are many and varied: users wishing to attend a concert during their Switzerland trip can use the event calendar not only to find out the date, time and venue, but also to consult a map showing the venue.

If you would like to be kept up to date on "swissinfo" news, you can subscribe to the e-mail newsletter under "About us". To take full advantage of www.swissinfo.org you need a PC or Mac with sound card and loudspeaker and, of course, an internet connection, as well as a browser (generally Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape Communicator), and Real Player G2 to play back audio and video files.

The latter (currently Version 7) can be downloaded free from www.realplayer.com and installed on your PC/Mac. Just follow the installation instructions.

*Manuel Küffer
Multimedia Marketing*

The February issue was outstanding with the evocative cover photograph of the Basle Carnival participants. It brought back many memories of a visit to Basle in the 1960's with my relatives.

Carl Radimerski, Canada

When I picked up my February copy it immediately grabbed my attention: fantastic.

Gisela Mertes, Spain

We are annoyed and sad that by using this image on the front page our town is shown to be in a presumably desolate structural state through the use of what is, in itself, an atmospheric and very old photo.

Liliane Schär-Bossi, Switzerland

I am quite annoyed about the cover picture because of the dilapidated image of the streets.

Letizia Heinrich, Germany

Your cover page with the two carnival-goers looks genuine and romantic. However I am ashamed to see a photograph of a place in Basle which looks

so neglected and run-down. Hopefully you will one day discover some more beautiful photos of this splendid old town.

Yvonne Lazar, France

Martinstag in Sursee

"How does Switzerland celebrate?"
SR 1/2000

Until well into the 20th century lynchings in the USA were a tradition that brought hundreds and thousands of revellers together. If the victim was set



on fire as well, some even called them barbecues.

Could it be that the helpless goose you showed on your Swiss traditions pages is the Swiss equivalent of an Ameri-

can lynching? Everyone seems to be enjoying the helpless animal's flight and plight. I was hoping that the goose may be made of paper mache but it looks very real. If it is real, I hope that at least this tradition, this inhumane spectacle will go by the way of lynchings and become a thing of the gruesome past.

Rosemarie H. Tucker, USA

What a disgusting picture! What barbarian century are we living in?

Sabine Nellen, Australia

Festival culture in French-speaking Switzerland

"The festival of festivals" SR 1/2000

I do not dispute that the "Fête des Vignerons de Vevey" is one of the most important events in French-speaking Switzerland. However it was not the monks who cleared the land and introduced vine growing on the Swiss bank of Lake Geneva but the Romans. As for the "Fêtes du tir" (shooting festivals) in the Vaud canton, they do not



bring together the population for the distribution of prizes "as they come out of mass", since most of the Vaud canton attend the Reformed church.

It is also wrong to say that throughout French speaking Switzerland "carnaval" is celebrated as well as "la Saint-Martin" – two festivals unheard of in Geneva, which is where I come from, whilst they do not mention the celebration of "l'Escalade" for which there is an impressive procession every year. They do not mention either the "Fête de l'Indépendance" which is the annual patriotic celebration of the Vaud canton, "la Bénichon" in Fribourg or "la Saint-Nicolas" in Valais.

Lucien Wasmer, Mexico