

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 33 (2006)  
**Heft:** 3  
  
**Anhang:** Regional news : USA

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# swiss roots

[www.swissroots.org](http://www.swissroots.org)

The events in California were only the start of the year-round program of Swiss Roots (see articles on following pages)!

More memorable highlights were experienced with the viewing of the Swiss Federal Charter of 1291, known as the "Schweizer Bundesbrief" at Philadelphia's Constitution Center on its first voyage outside of Switzerland, which attracted Swiss dignitaries and historians to the "City of Brotherly Love".

Also, Ben Röthlisberger, Quarterback of the Pittsburgh Steelers has completed his journey to Switzerland and brought back fond impressions of his family's ancestry from the Bernese Emmental

region. You are able to read more about his trip, how he socialized with Swiss sports fans, and how he experienced Switzerland in the various fields presented to him on our website [www.swissroots.org](http://www.swissroots.org).

The main purpose of the Swiss Roots website is to have people interact with each other, on genealogical topics but also on whatever Swiss topic is of interest to you. Many people have already contributed to the site by becoming a member, adding a story or starting discussions on a variety of issues through the message boards. Consequently, reward points are collected to retrieve nice gifts and sweepstakes for trips to Switzerland are won.

On the website, you are also able to follow the route of the Postal Bus. The next bigger attraction will certainly be a special one for the New York audience, when Swiss Roots celebrates the Swiss National Day on Ellis Island on July 29<sup>th</sup> – in presence of the Swiss postal bus (yes, it will be driven onto the island!). You will be able to read all about this in the next regional news-issue of the Swiss Revue.

On a separate note, Swiss Roots is delighted about the positive and creative suggestions for detours and extra-stops received from the Swiss Revue readers in respect to the Postal Bus Roadshow - these would definitely generate good

## Next and last Regional News for 2006:

# 5/2006 - Copy deadline: Sept. 07

Mailing date: Oct. 18

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stories for the website, don't hesitate to post such notes!

*Rosina Colazzo-Franzese*  
Consulate General of  
Switzerland, New York  
[rosina.colazzo-franzese@eda.admin.ch](mailto:rosina.colazzo-franzese@eda.admin.ch)



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## CALIFORNIA

# Who saw the Swiss Roots Postal Bus in California?



**The postal bus at the UCLA campus for the glamorous finale of the CARNAVAL exhibition at the Fowler Museum**

People from Los Angeles and San Francisco couldn't believe their eyes when they saw the Swiss

those narrow roads with hairpin curves in the alpine regions. The familiar tü-ta-tüü echoes through



**Posing in front of the Oakland Bay Bridge**

Roots Postal Bus cruising their streets in April. They cheered along the streets, approached the bus whenever it came to a halt and were intrigued by the technical and transportation insights given by the driver, Alfred "Fredi" Böni. As a matter of fact, I can imagine that not even Fredi himself could believe his eyes each morning when he saw his 4-wheeled companion facing the next adventures on this six-month U.S. tour.

This year Switzerland celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the yellow Postal Bus System that transports you safely from one location to another where there is no railroad connection – often along

many a deep valley and over mountain passes.

In Los Angeles, the bus was prominently featured in a carnival parade and chauffeured the Rätz Clique from Basel to various locations.

The Press of the Greater San Francisco Bay Area met the bus on April 20. The wonderful, authentic Bus drew quite some attention at Sea Cliff in San Francisco. Two days later – a day long celebration at CAL DAY in Berkeley, CA followed - featuring a Swiss Pavilion with Swiss food, Swiss music, free yodeling classes and more attractions. If you missed the buzzing bus – visit [www.Postbus.ch](http://www.Postbus.ch). If you

wish to find out more about the recent CAL DAY at Berkeley, do visit [www.berkeley.edu/calday](http://www.berkeley.edu/calday).

Enough said, those of you who haven't seen the bus yet should finally get a chance to do so. Postal Bus mee+s Cable Car, Postal Bus

ries like the University Campus of UCLA Fowler Museum in Los Angeles, Wilshire Blvd., and eventually Santa Monica and Venice Beach, Fifes and drums were sounding through the streets attracting the interest of Californians and capti-



**At Venice Beach, the old postal bus meets up with a more recent model**

mee+s Golden Gate bridge and Postal Bus doubles up with a second Swiss Postal Bus, which has migrated to the U.S. earlier and for good, first generation so to speak.

The Postal Bus hasn't been the

vating them with their costumes and traditions.

*Rosina Colazzo-Franzese  
Consulate General of Switzerland,  
New York*



**The Swiss Postal Bus has a close encounter with one of the famous San Francisco Cable Cars**

only Swiss Roots revelation so far; certainly, the audience was equally surprised to encounter the 30 people corps of eager musicians from the Carnival Clique from Basel "Rätz" on such foreign territo-

*rosina.colazzo-franzese@eda.admin.ch*

*Also excerpts from articles by  
Gaby Burkert and  
Doris Ritz*



## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

# The Rätz Clique turns heads in LA

The first 2006 Swiss Roots Event - the CARNAVAL celebration on the UCLA Campus on April 8th - has been a great success! Over 3000

reflecting on the theme they are taking on. At Carnival, costumed, masked and fortified with drums and piccolo flutes/fifes, they

nival traditions throughout the world – Basel included. That was the spark that ignited the idea of bringing the Rätz Clique to Los Angeles. On April 8th, the Museum put on a special celebration. Children and adults attended the mask painting workshop and decorated the original Basler Larven (Masks, brought and sponsored by the Rätz Clique) with great focus and dedication. The visitors enjoyed a taste of Swiss specialties like Bircher Muesli and Basler Leckerli, tried to play the piccolo flute in the flute playing workshop and admired the beautifully decorated antique Swiss Postal Bus.



**Piccolo Player taking her job very seriously**

delight. Another performance was given at the residence of the Swiss Consul General Brigitta Schoch Dettweiler.

The 35 members of the Rätz Clique certainly conquered this town. Thank you Rätz Clique for a lot of fun. Thanks also to those who put their wholehearted efforts into this project.

For more pictures check out <[www.raetz.ch](http://www.raetz.ch)>, go to: "Aktuell,



**The Rätz Clique marching in the CARNAVAL parade in front of the Fowler Museum in West Los Angeles**

visitors participated in the festivities, which set a glamorous finale for the CARNAVAL exhibition at the UCLA Fowler Museum.

To add to the fun, the Basler fife-and-drum Rätz Clique, especially flown in for this event, added color, spice and sounds to the Carnival Parade.

What is a Clique? Carnival groups form to make fun of local events that made headlines during the year. The Cliques wear creative costumes and even better masks

march through the city. Carnival takes place during three days, just before the season of lent, when Christians are getting ready to fast for 6 weeks until Easter. During Carnival, people feel a need to let loose. And indeed they do. Many people - even stand-up citizens - do not see their beds during those days...

Since last November, the Fowler Museum at the University of California, West Los Angeles, featured an excellent exhibition about car-



**Marching along famous Venice Beach**

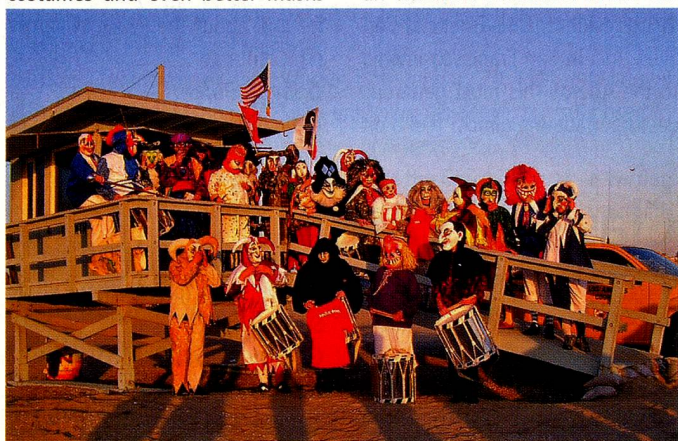
The two yellow Swiss buses chauffeured the Rätz Clique to other locations for performances – such as the Waterfront Café at colorful Venice Beach - owned by the Bernese couple Stephan and Susie Bachofner. They must be the first Clique who ever tried to march on sand! Even for Venice – where everything is colorful, passers-by, bicyclists, roller bladers, etc. applauded enthusiastically.

More performances were given on Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica and Wilshire Boulevard in West Los Angeles in front of the Consulate General. Lots of heads turned and the wide eyed public was won over with

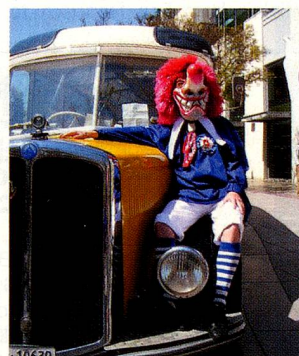
Bilder vo der Rätz-Clique in Los Angeles"

*Text: Doris Ritzi*

*Photos: Rosina Colazzo*



**The Rätz Clique enjoys the evening sun after a strenuous march through the sand at Venice Beach**



**Norbert Arnold, Deputy Consul General, having fun under the mask of an authentic Basler Waggis.**



## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

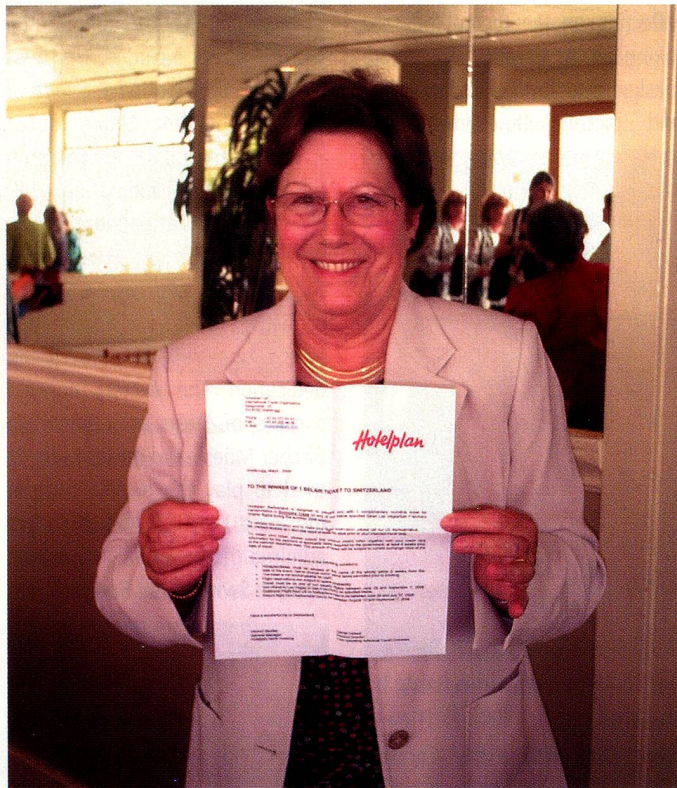
## 98 Swiss-American Ladies in Sausalito, CA

May 3, 2006 was an important day in many a calendar of 100 Swiss and Swiss-American women of the Greater San Francisco Bay Area. Actually the area became larger and larger as days to the deadline got shorter.

Yours truly organized a Swiss Ladies Luncheon – after not having done that for the better of 10 years. There were two reasons: not only was it long overdue – but San Francisco has a new Consul General with a wife! For 6 years we enjoyed a bachelor Consul General of Switzerland – a real terrific one!

The idea dawned on me to combine a last time venture of this caliber and the introduction of the new First Lady of Switzerland in San Francisco! The second reason was to officially announce my retirement come October from an actual working woman to a life of leisure, filled with lots of travel and an open agenda. To do more volunteer work: I started already to docent at the small Depot Museum of the Sonoma Historical Society and also in a tiny library of another local Historical League. That's all.

Based on all this I found immediately terrific sponsors for this affair. The door prize of a r/t ticket on Belair from San Francisco to



**Mrs. Edith Borne, living in Marin County, was the lucky winner of a round-trip ticket from San Francisco to Zurich on Belair, donated by Herbie Mueller from Hotelplan.**

Zurich, Switzerland was donated by Hotelplan of Zurich, Switzerland via their US manager Herbie Mueller! A lot of applause went through the beautiful historic Alta Mira 'Il Fornaio' when the winner stepped forward with her raffle ticket in hand: we congratulate Mrs. Edith Borne, living in Marin County.

Each place setting held a large chocolate bar (72% Cocoa – new!) donated by (Lindt Switzerland owned) Ghirardelli Chocolate Co. of San Francisco – and it's CEO Jürgen Auerbach. And we thank them so very much. The applause was also deafening! Last but nevertheless least: Esther Scott, First Vice President, UBS Financial Services, Inc. in San Francisco invited to the Aperol! This most generous gesture made me almost feel a bit

guilty. You see, I figured on about 30 – 50 women. And when I had the magic number 100 I stopped. Esther does accept new clients.

In Marylene Lichtenstern – my guest of Honor – we all met not just a gracious First Lady, but her short speech also enlightened us about her career as the wife of a diplomat of the Swiss Government. She is Superwoman. Not only did she accompany her husband to many general meetings of so many Swiss Societies and Clubs – no, she is also a grand hostess at their Residence in San Francisco – with a lot of flair and know-how. And what nobody knew: she also is a designer. Jewelry, fashion – even handbags. And she is very successful. I thank Marylene Lichtenstern for accepting this invitation – she was a hit!

This Luncheon was only possible with the help of Margrit Keller and Erna Stucky. And also with the help of my husband Ruedi in many details – and who physically was in the parking lot directing the parking of close to 50 cars ... To my readers who write so faithfully I promise – that here and there you will still read some articles – of subjects which are of interest to me, and hopefully to you! After all, this is my 42<sup>nd</sup> year of writing for and about the Swiss in Northern California ...

Gaby H. Burkert  
Grueziwohl@aol.com



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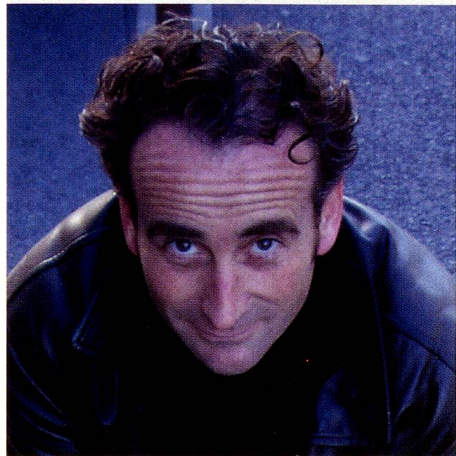
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# Meet Swiss Designer Jean-Benoit Levy – formerly Basel - now in San Francisco

I just happened to meet with young designers at the De Young Museum – when I was asked if I

sign with teachers such as Armin Hoffman, Max Schmidt, Wolfgang Weingart and Andre Gurtler.



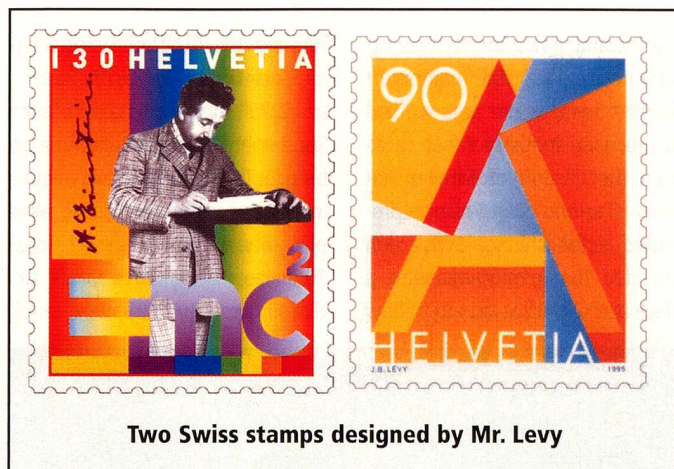
**Graphic Artist Jean-Benoit Levy**

was familiar with the design work of Jean-Benoit Levy, the famous designer of Basel, Switzerland. To my chagrin – I wasn't. Moments later I realized that the designer of the SFr. 1.30 Einstein Stamp (2005) now lives and works in San Francisco. JBL studied from 1978 - 1983 at the Basel School of De-

In 1989 JBL opened his own studio in Basel called A N D (www.and.ch).

AND created graphic design for various local, regional and national clients – collaborating eventually with other marketing and advertising agencies. He and his team created Logos, Pictograms, Presentations, Book Design, Mint, Branding, Annual Reports

and web sites. JBL is best known in Switzerland for his Street Posters and Postage Stamps. In parallel to his client work, his educational activities are: Art Center College of Design Europe: 1991 – 1996. U.S. East Coast 1986 – 1995 at RISD in Providence, RI. On the West Coast since 1998 Levy teaches in San



**Two Swiss stamps designed by Mr. Levy**

Francisco at the California College for the Arts and at the Academy of Art University advanced typography – and interactive information Design with Claudia Dallendoerfer. Jean-Benoit Levy is a Member of the Alliance Graphique Internatio-

nale (AGI).

What a treasure! Visit his web site and contact him directly! *Stamp illustrations and photo of the artist: PTT Switzerland*  
Text: Gaby H. Burkert  
Grueziwohl@aol.com

## Call for heirs

### Heinrich Wacker

Born on July 5 1923, citizen of Staffelbach, canton of Aargau, residing at Buchserstrasse 20, 5034 Suhr, died on January 8, 2006.

In compliance with art. 555, al. 1 of the Swiss Civil Code, the authorities are looking for the legal heiress

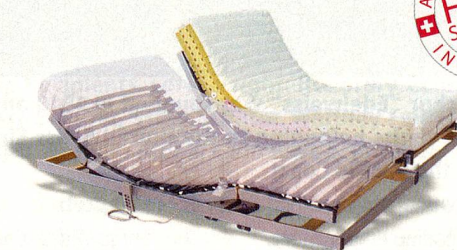
**Hulda Geissberger**, born Wacker, born January 20, 1901, last known place of origin Remigen, AG, with unknown residence, but supposed to have been living in the United States of America.

Her descendants are requested to contact the Court of Aarau in writing by March 20, 2007 with proof of residence and documents confirming that they are legal heirs. After this date, the inheritance may be divided among the known heirs, except in case of court interjection.

Aarau, March 14, 2006 – The Presidency of the Court

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## WASHINGTON

# History of the Swiss Clubs in Tacoma, Washington

The Tacoma Swiss Society was established in 1889. The majority of the first Swiss in our area worked in the dairy industry. Most came from the Canton of Schwyz but other Cantons were also represented. Establishing a Swiss club provided the immigrants with a place to socialize among fellow

forming the "United Swiss Singing Societies of the Pacific Coast". In 1975 they joined the Swiss Sportsmen's Club of Tacoma as a branch. They have been very active in keeping song and music alive plus attending the West Coast Sängerfest every three years. Active singers vary to 25 men.



**The Männerchor "Edelweiss" was founded in 1910 and is one of the oldest choirs belonging to the United Swiss Singing Societies of the Pacific Coast**

countrymen. Often they helped each other in finding employment. Members had to have a Swiss last name and today's membership totals 187 men.

## Tacoma Swiss Ladies

In 1908 the Swiss ladies formed the Tacoma Swiss Ladies Society "Helvetia". Ladies of Swiss descent or being married to a Swiss are entitled to membership. The Swiss ladies are a very active society with 360 members.

## Männerchor "Edelweiss"

The Männerchor "Edelweiss" started in 1910 and held the first Sängerfest in 1934 with Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon

## Swiss Rifle Club

The Swiss Rifle Club established in 1913, was once active with Portland, Oregon, the Lewis Pacific Swiss Society, Frances, Washington and Vancouver, B.C. Canada in organizing Schützenfests. Today it is more for hunting, but has become very popular for shotgun shooting, with a large young crowd participating. Easter Ham shoots and Thanksgiving and Christmas Turkey shoots are popular. Safety classes are required for all the young new members. The Swiss Rifle Club helped form the Swiss Sportsmen's Club in 1958 by merging with the Schwingers.



**The beautiful Clubhouse belongs to the Swiss Sportsmen's Club but is used by all the clubs.**

## Swiss Schwinger Club

The Swiss Schwinger Club began in 1928 and has been an important part of our Swiss functions. Besides holding Spring and Fall Schwingfests, they participate in other clubs Schwingfests, in Washington, Oregon and California. They too, helped form the Swiss Sportsmen's Club in 1958 by merging with the Rifle Club.

verein), established in 1924 has been helping the Swiss in unfortunate situations whenever needed. It isn't always easy to find a Swiss who fulfill the conditions for help.

## Swiss Sportsmen's Club

In 1958 the Swiss Rifle Club and the Swiss Schwinger Club merged to form the Swiss Sportsmen's Club. The Rifle club had the land which has been enlarged to 40 acres. It admits only men, but men married to a girl with any Swiss ancestry are also eligible to

## Swiss Relief Society (Hilfsverein)

The Swiss Relief Society (Hilfs-



**The "Enzian" Swiss Ladies Choir, although founded much later than the other clubs, participates very actively in all the Clubs activities and the Sängerfest every three years.**



join. The Club has a large chalet style hall, a smaller hall for more intimate events, a beautiful schwinger pit and outside stage, a schwinger hut for practice, and a shot gun hut and shooting range. Every Wednesday up to twenty retired members come to keep the park and hall tidy. The Swiss Sportsmen's Club is proud to have 480 members.

#### "Enzian" Swiss Ladies Choir

The "Enzian" Swiss Ladies Choir began in 1988, with an active group of ladies who help keep our clubs entertained. They also are members of the United Swiss Singing Societies of the Pacific Coast.

All the Swiss clubs hold their meetings and functions at our Swiss Park. We have been very fortunate to have excellent cooperation among our combined clubs. We have Swiss musicians, yodelers, etc. to keep our Swiss tradition active. Some of our yearly functions include the following: Scholarship Dinner, Easter Hunt, Rippli Dinner & Enzian Concert, Old Timers Recognition, Männerchor Concert, Octoberfest, Swiss Dancing Lessons, Swiss Kids Camp, Kids Christmas Party, Masquerade Dance, Jass Parties, New Years Eve Party, Crab Feed, Spring & Fall Schwingfests, Golf Tournament and Ham & Turkey Shoots.

*Dick Inderbitzin*

*Tacoma, Washington*

*dpinderbitzin@gmail.com* ■



**Reception in Seattle for Philippe Goetschel as new Honorary Swiss Consul of Seattle, from L to R: Dick Inderbitzin, Tacoma Swiss Club, Swiss Consul General Jean-François Lichtenstern, Swiss Ambassador Christian Blickenstorfer, new Honorary Swiss Consul in Seattle Philippe Goetschel and Martin Holdener, President of Tacoma Swiss Society**

## Tacoma Swiss Society Membership and Scholarship Dinner

On February 26, 2006 the Tacoma Swiss Society hosted its annual membership and scholarship dinner at the Swiss Park at Bonney Lake, WA. The hall and tables were nicely decorated and awaiting the 174 members and guests to a catered pork loin and chicken dinner with liquid refreshments included.

presented us with his background and what his new position has to offer the members of the Swiss community. Martin asked Joe Burgi to give the invocation for our delicious meal. During dinner the John Faver Family Orchestra with Werner Blaser assisting, played peppy Swiss music.

After dinner Martin invited

dance that were eighty years and older. Our oldest member in the Society was there, Frank D. Suter, (99 years old) born January 28, 1907 in Muotathal, Schwyz and still an active and sharp Jass and Pinochle player. Frank has been a member for 68 years.

The Tacoma Swiss Society is the oldest Swiss Club in Washing-



**Tacoma Swiss Society College Scholarship Recipients. Left to right: Honorary Consul Philippe Goetschel, Kelsey Williams (Dettling), Tessa Schilter, Stacy Schilter, Whitney Felder, Willi Boni, and Bradley Kaelin. Absent recipients: Alyss M. Ryan (Kollar) and Kurt E. Rufener.**

We were honored to have our new Honorary Swiss Consul from Seattle, Philippe Goetschel, in attendance with his charming guest Laura. The society's president, Martin Holdener, welcomed everyone to our special event and introduced the Swiss Consul, who

Lee Baerny, the Society secretary, to introduce the recipients of the Scholarships to come forward to say a few words about their college and future. Each recipient thanked the Society and Martin Holdener presented each with a thousand dollar check and they were personally congratulated by our Swiss Consul. There were eight awards given. Six were able to attend as two were away at distant schools. The checks were given to Willi Boni Jr., Whitney Felder, Bradley E. Kaelin, Stacy A. Schilter, Tessa A. Schilter, Kurt E. Rufener, Alyss M. Ryan (Kollar) and Kelsey M. Williams (Dettling).

Martin Holdener then introduced the 19 members in atten-

tion State, organized in 1889, the same year Washington became a State. Only men with Swiss ancestry having a Swiss last name are eligible for membership. Those receiving the Scholarships must have a father or grandfather, living or deceased, who is or was a member of the Society. The current membership is 187.

Anybody living in the Tacoma area who wishes to become a member of one of our Swiss clubs can contact me for further information.

*Dick Inderbitzin*

*Tacoma, Washington*

*dpinderbitzin@gmail.com* ■



WASHINGTON D.C.

## Urs Ziswiler - New Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States of America

Dear Swiss Review readers:

It is a great pleasure to introduce myself to you as the new Ambassador of Switzerland to the U.S. After having served as Swiss Ambassador to Canada until 2004, I am delighted to be back on the continent.

I commence my assignment at a time when the already thriving relations between Switzerland and the U.S. are about to be raised to a new level. Only a few weeks ago, our two governments agreed to intensify significantly our cooperation in the fields of diplomacy, trade and investment, terrorism-re-

lated investigations, and exchange of students. A Swiss-U.S. agreement on research and science cooperation is ready to be signed as well.

During my various travels through Canada and the U.S., I was always impressed by the rich heritage Swiss immigrants brought to the North American continent and the countless Swiss clubs, associations, and individuals who still cultivate this heritage. Through their activities, they make a crucial



contribution to the mutual understanding of the peoples of our two nations.

I commend and applaud all those who are so active in this important field. And I'm pleased that the promotion and celebration of Swiss-American heritage will get an

additional boost this year, thanks to the nationwide project "Swiss Roots" and its innovative online platform [www.swissroots.org](http://www.swissroots.org). I encourage all of you to participate in this unique initiative.

My goal is to be a Swiss Ambassador who not only serves in the nation's capital, but is also active in the *entire* country. That's why I'm determined to travel, to meet and exchange ideas with as many Swiss and U.S. citizens as possible, and to visit Swiss-American communities, local businesses, and associations all over the U.S. I eagerly look forward to these encounters and hope to meet many of you in the upcoming months and years.

Yours truly,

Urs Ziswiler

### Biographie of Ambassador Urs Ziswiler

Ambassador Ziswiler arrived in Washington, D.C. as Ambassador of Switzerland to the United States in May 2006. Prior to his current posting, he served as Head of the Political Directorate of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Bern, as the second highest ranking diplomat in the Swiss Foreign Service. In this capacity, he was also Vice-Chairman of the Presence Switzerland (PRS) Commission, Switzerland public outreach agency.

Previously, Mr. Ziswiler served as a Senior Diplomatic Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Federal

Councilor Micheline Calmy-Rey. Since joining the Foreign Service in 1979, Ambassador Ziswiler has held a number of diplomatic postings both in Bern and abroad. He served as Ambassador of Switzerland to Canada and the Bahamas (1999-2004), Chargé d'affaires a.i. in Zagreb for Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993, Deputy Head of Mission at the Swiss Embassies in Buenos Aires (1994-1995) and Tel Aviv (1988-1990). From 1980-1985, he was Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassies in Kinshasa, Lagos, and Oslo and also served at the Swiss Mission to

the European Union in Brussels.

In Bern, Ambassador Ziswiler served as Head of the Political Division for Human Rights and Humanitarian Policy and Coordinator for International Refugee Policy (1995-1999), Spokesman and Head of the Information Department of the European Integration Office (1990-1992), and in the same office, also served as Chairman of the EFTA Trade Committee (1987) and managed relationships with the EFTA countries and the former Yugoslavia (1985-1988).

Ambassador Ziswiler began his career as a junior expert for the World Bank in Madagascar and later served as a Delegate of the

International Committee of the Red Cross in Beirut, Gaza, Tel Aviv, and Kampala. He holds a law degree from the Universities of Geneva and Zurich and has a post-graduate diploma on developing countries from the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. Ambassador Ziswiler is fluent in German, English, French, Spanish, and Italian and has a basic knowledge of Arabic.

Ambassador Ziswiler, a citizen of Buttisholz in the Canton of Lucerne, was born in Muri in the Canton of Argovia in 1949. He is married to Ronit Ziswiler and they have two children. ■



## WASHINGTON

# Ambassador Blickenstorfer visits **Microsoft®**

Redmond, WA - On March 7, Microsoft welcomed Ambassador Christian Blickenstorfer as well as the new consular team: San Francisco Consul General Jean-François Lichtenstern and Seattle Honorary Consul Philippe Goetschel. Mr. Goetschel had also invited a cross section of Swiss high tech professionals and academic researchers from Seattle to join the many Swiss employees of Microsoft in welcoming the ambassador.

The forty participants introduced themselves as they enjoyed the Microsoft-provided lunch. Honorary Consul Goetschel then thanked Microsoft for its hospi-

eral Council and is embodied in several projects, such as an upcoming science agreement between the two countries, and recent agreements covering law enforcement, foreign affairs cooperation and the recent Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum.

Consul General Lichtenstern, recently arrived to San Francisco from Hong Kong, presented the



From left to right: Honorary Consul Philippe Goetschel, Ambassador Christian Blickenstorfer, Consul General Jean-François Lichtenstern



View of the Swiss group inside the Microsoft house, listening to various presentations.

tality and explained the twofold purpose of the meeting; first, to present the Microsoft company to the delegation. Second, to launch a series of quarterly lunches for the Swiss professional community in Seattle.

In his address, Ambassador Blickenstorfer explained how his visit fit with several current initiatives to foster relations between Switzerland and the USA. This intensification of bilateral relations has been prioritized by the Fed-

activities and responsibilities of the Consulate General of Switzerland in San Francisco, and looked forward to future events in Seattle.

The last presentation was given by Christian Simm, Executive Director of Swissnex. Mr. Simm presented the multifaceted activities of Swissnex, an innovative collaboration between the Swiss government, universities and the private sector. Mr. Simm invited the participants to attend one of the many events hosted by Swissnex

in San Francisco.

At the conclusion of the meal, the delegation and participants were invited to visit the Microsoft House, which showcases current and future Microsoft technology in the home setting.

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## CH / US: The Ties that bind

Switzerland and America have a lot more in common than most people think. The two "sister republics" enjoy a longstanding relationship, well anchored in political, economic and social values, that goes back more than 200 years.

More than a million Americans of Swiss descent have left their indelible mark on numerous aspects of life in the USA. There are many names that top the list of the more famous Swiss, including Meyer Guggenheim, a Swiss immigrant, who founded a great

69,500 Swiss live and work in the United States. Although separated by an ocean, the two countries have established very close ties on the economic and political fronts as well. Moreover, the trans-Atlantic partnership is strengthening day by day.



**Academy Award-Winning Actress Renée Zellweger is of Swiss descent**

American business dynasty. In the early twentieth century, the Guggenheims were one of America's wealthiest families. Louis-Joseph Chevrolet, of La Chaux-de-Fonds origin, was the founder of the namesake Chevrolet Motor Car Company and one of the best race-car drivers in the world. And most recently, there is Renee Zellweger, whose father and grandparents came from the tiny village of Au in canton St. Gallen and spawned an Academy Award-winning Hollywood actress. On the other hand, some famous Americans – such as Charlie Chaplin, Elizabeth Taylor, Mark Twain, Yoko Ono, Michael Jackson and Tina Turner, to name a few – have also called Switzerland their home over the years. In fact, roughly 13,400 Americans live and work in Switzerland, and one million tourists from the USA visit Switzerland each year, while

### **Mutually prosperous economic ties**

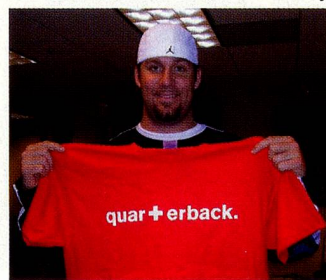
Switzerland is the USA's sixth-largest trading partner, and Swiss foreign direct investment in the USA amounted to USD 124 billion in 2004. Switzerland is the second-largest foreign investor worldwide in the US manufacturing sector, and more than 600 Swiss companies – including giants such as Nestlé, ABB, UBS, Credit Suisse and Novartis – operate in the USA, employing about half a million workers. Switzerland is the eight-largest buyer of US private services and purchases more US goods than India and Russia combined. On the other side of the coin, America is the second-largest export market for Switzerland after the EU. Moreover, US investment in Switzerland has jumped in recent years, climbing to roughly USD 100 billion annually. In addition, around 650 American companies, including Google, IBM, and McDonald's, operate in Switzerland, and some such as General Motors, Proctor & Gamble and Hewlett-Packard have also chosen the country as their European headquarters.

American consumers have a hearty appetite for Swiss cheese and chocolate, as well as for watches and Swiss Army knives. In 2004, Switzerland exported roughly CHF 14 billion in goods to the USA and imported about CHF 6 billion. Swiss exports to the USA also include high-precision machinery and tools, electronic

goods, high-quality pharmaceutical and chemical products, and engineering services.

### **Free trade agreement on the horizon?**

The close trading interrelationship between the USA and Switzerland over the years could ultimately culminate in a free-trade agreement (FTA). The two countries have been intensely engaged in the past year in exploratory talks on the feasibility of a bilateral trade pact. In September 2005, the Washington D.C.-based Institute for International Economics (IIE) presented a draft of its study on the prospects for an FTA between the USA and Switzerland. The next step would be for the two governments to commence official negotiations. But the window of opportunity is closing. The US Trade Act of 2002, which gives President George W. Bush so-called Trade Promotion Authority



**Who doesn't know Ben Röthlisberger?**

(TPA) to quickly push international trade agreements through Congress, expires in mid-2007. This leaves a roughly one-year window of opportunity for Switzerland to ink an agreement with the USA. However, some political pundits in Switzerland say there are still too many stumbling blocks, and concerns are mounting that the opportunity to enter into such an agreement with the world's greatest economic power is slowly slip-

ping away. Indeed, officials at the Federal Office for Agriculture as well as the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs have recently expressed dismay over the USA's unwillingness to make concessions on key points such as trade tariffs and US imports of genetically modified foods. Furthermore, Swiss farmers say that an FTA with the USA would constitute a threat to their existence.

### **The political front**

When it comes to political affairs, Switzerland and the USA have a unique bond. The United States does not have diplomatic relations with Cuba or Iran. But Switzerland oversees American "special interests" in those countries through its diplomatic channels there. Moreover, the cooperation is particularly noticeable with respect to issues of national security, such as the global war on terrorism, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, money laundering and international narcotics trafficking, as well as mediation of various crises around the world. In addition, the Swiss Parliament and US House of Representatives have directly established strong political ties between the two countries. In 2001, 24 members of Parliament founded the "Parliamentary Association Switzerland-USA," representing all major political parties as well as both the Council of States and the National Council. The USA reciprocated in 2003 by creating the "Friends of Switzerland Caucus," which comprises 32 members of Congress, whose aim is to strengthen political dialogue between the two countries' legislative branches.

### **Historical ties**

The USA and Switzerland share a



long history of common values if only because both nations place a great emphasis on individual rights and an open society. Naturally then, both nations are built on a federal system: The US Articles of Confederation were modeled after the old Swiss alliance of sovereign states, and Switzerland was inspired by the US Constitution when it formed its federal state in 1848. But are you aware of some of the lesser-known Swiss-American ties?



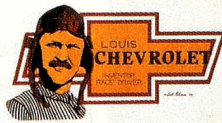
**Most Swiss have heard of General Johann August Sutter (1803-1880)**

Early in the American Republic (1804) Jefferson was easily re-elected, but needed a strong hand in finances to profit from the temporary cessation of the war between England and France, which permitted American merchants to trade with both sides and produced unprecedented national prosperity. By selecting Albert Gallatin as secretary of the Treasury, Jefferson placed one of the most capable managers of fiscal policy in the most strategic location. Gallatin, a Swiss-born prodigy with impeccable Republican credentials, dominated the cabinet discussions alongside James Madison, the ever-loyal Jefferson disciple who

served as secretary of state.

Most readers have heard the name General Johann August Sutter (1803-1880), Swiss immigrant who founded Neu-Helvetien (Sutter's Mill) in 1839, now Sacramento, California. Sutter played a pivotal role in the great California Gold Rush and also founded a colony in Hawaii. Did you know he is buried in Pennsylvania?

Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz (1807-1873) a world-famous zoologist, glaciologist and geologist is considered one of America's greatest scientists. Born of Swiss parents, he was appointed professor of zoology and geology at Harvard University and is credited with suggesting the first concept of an ice age. World War I ace fighter pilot Eddie Rickenbacker (1890-1973) was born in Columbus, Ohio to Swiss immigrants. Like many

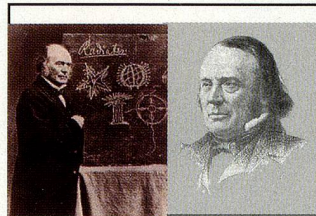


**Louis-Joseph Chevrolet, of La Chaux-de-Fonds origin, was the founder of the namesake Chevrolet Motor Car Company**

Swiss-Germans, he is often mistaken as a German immigrant.

The German-Swiss-American scientist and Nobel Prize winner (1921) Albert Einstein was born in Ulm, Württemberg on March 14,

1879. He spent his early formative years in Munich. He and his family later lived in Milan, Italy and both Berne and Zurich, Switzerland. Einstein published his famous "Special Theory of Relativity" in 1905 while in Switzerland. Einstein often joked that if his work was proven true, all three nations would claim



**2 pictures of Swiss Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz (1807-1873) a world-famous zoologist, glaciologist and geologist**

him – and if proven untrue, they would claim he 'belonged' to the other nations! He called his Swiss and American years the happiest of his life.

In an even remoter twist, actor Yul Brynner (1920-1985) was born in Vladivostok, USSR to Boris Brynner, a Swiss-Mongolian engineer, and Marousia Blagovidova, the daughter of a Russian doctor. He was named Yul after his Swiss grandfather Jules Brynner. He later lived in Paris and became an American citizen. Who would have imagined Brynner as Swiss-American?

Finally, we have US President Dwight David Eisenhower (1890-1969) born in Denison, Texas. He

was the third of seven sons of David Jacob Eisenhower and Ida Elizabeth Stover Eisenhower. Their German and Swiss ancestors had arrived in America in the 1730s seeking religious freedom. Eisenhower was the first US president of all 50 states.

### **An enduring friendship**

But for every famous name on the long list of Swiss descendants who have influenced American culture, politics and society, there are a million more who saw numerous opportunities for a new and prosperous life in a democratic America. Among these, for example, were 150 unemployed migrant textile workers from the Linth Valley, who set up New Glarus in the state Wisconsin in 1845, as well as the wine-growers from Ticino, who found a new lease on life in the hills of sunny California. Indeed, the relationship between Switzerland and America can be framed around two countries and peoples that share a number of core values, including a strong belief in freedom, democracy, international peace and security, as well as the rule of law and human rights. This is a trans-Atlantic friendship that has endured many calamities – two world wars, the Holocaust, terrorism – over the centuries and will continue to flourish amid a global sea of change.

*Robert Anderson in Switzerland,*

*Dr. Les Sutter in the USA* ■

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## Daniel Borel - Of men and mice!

Switzerland's population is a mere 7.2 million, and yet many Swiss scientists, businessmen, professionals, athletes, actors or artists have made contributions that have had a worldwide impact. Some products and services that we routinely use are truly the brainchildren of Swiss visionaries and entrepreneurs. That can be said of mice. They are pervasive... especially those pertaining to the computer family!

Logitech, the world's leading manufacturer of computer mice, and its current chairman and co-founder, Daniel Borel - a native of Neuchâtel/NE and early migrant to the Canton of Vaud - have done much to perpetuate the breed.

Daniel Borel graduated with a degree in Engineering from EPFL - Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. In 1976, he was granted a one-year scholarship from the Swiss National Science Fund and enrolled at Stanford University where he graduated with a Master's degree in Computer Science (1979) and met his future partner, Pierluigi Zappacosta with whom he co-founded Logitech (1981).

He found the energy and enterprising spirit in California electrifying. Silicon Valley was bubbling and the first indication of what was to become the "computer revolution" was in the air. After working on a "pre-desktop" publishing system for Bobst (Switzerland), and a graphical editor for Ricoh of Japan, which never materialized as commercial product, Logitech's attention was drawn by what was to become the "computer mouse", introduced on the Xerox Star System in early 1978.

At the same time, development efforts were going on at ETH Zurich (Professor Wirth), and at EPFL its Lausanne campus (Professor Nicoud's team). Thanks to its net-

work, Logitech was able to build on the Nicoud P4 mouse and bring



**Daniel Borel, a native of Neuchâtel is Chairman and Co-Founder of Logitech, the world's leading manufacturer of computer mice**

it from lab to market. This was the start of the venture that led to the industrialization of the manufacturing process and the beginning of a long relationship with OEM's (Original Equipment Manufacturer). OEMs - especially HP which was the first major corporation to trust the young company - were key incentives for Logitech to develop very high standards of quality, as well as mass manufacturing capabilities.

Today, Logitech is the world's leading manufacturer and marketer of computer peripherals. With the development of new applications and technologies - especially the Internet, Logitech has moved beyond the PC and into the "digital home". Its customers can now enjoy a wide range of devices de-

signed for an array of activities - gaming, multimedia, audio and video communication over the Internet (VOIP/Instant Messaging). Its retail business includes personal peripherals for platforms beyond the PC - such as gaming consoles, portable music players, mobile phones and home entertainment systems.

Logitech employs over 8'000 people around the world. It is present on five continents and its products are sold in over 100 countries. Yearly earnings amount to U.S.\$ 1.48 billion (March 31, 2005). Offices are maintained in the U.S. (Fremont/CA), Romanel-sur-Morges, VD (Switzerland), Eu-

rope, Japan and Asia.

In 1998, Daniel Borel and his wife left the U.S. to get closer to Switzerland. Guerrino De Luca became Logitech's new CEO, with Borel remaining close to the company as chairman of the Board. In October, this year, Logitech will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary - a remarkable feat in the very competitive computer market.

When asked where he feels at home, Daniel Borel replies "In a plane!" Nevertheless, he still keeps tight links with Switzerland. The family maintains residences in Apples/VD, London, California and the South of France. His three children seem to follow suit: His oldest son Julien works at Google's, his youngest son is a sound engineer at Dolby, San Francisco. And his daughter Laura has just been accepted at Stanford University - the proud father states.

What was the reason for his success? Hard work, passion, entrepreneurship and luck, emphasizes Daniel Borel. In this respect he feels that Switzerland needs more people ready to question the status quo, with a willingness to "get out of the box" and try the new and unknown, in order to remain competitive in the global market pace.

*Doris Ritzi*

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