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Congratulations

I was extremely impressed by the last edition of your magazine. The article on the economic crisis is one of the best I have ever read on the topic. Of course, it is not an exhaustive report – nor indeed could it be – but the main points are set out with great clarity. Many congratulations! The same is also true of the review of René Zeyer's book. It will stand out from the many publications on this topic. However, I was very saddened to hear that "Swiss Review" will only appear four times a year in future. Of course, one has to live within one's means, but I cannot understand Parliament's budget cuts.

W. GEISER, GELSENKIRCHEN,
GERMANY

Fantastic

The new online version of "Swiss Review" is great. I really like the option of clicking on links in the text which take you to other pages and/or information. I also appreciate having access to the editions in other countries. Thank you so much.

F.J. RÖLLI, SANTA MARTA,
COLOMBIA

Swiss humour

I once again took great pleasure in reading "Swiss

Review", in particular the articles on Erni and Swiss humour. The cover page to illustrate Swiss humour was one of the most interesting yet. It was created by a Swiss German artist to illustrate how the French-speaking Swiss are seen by the Swiss Germans. It could equally well have been produced by a French-speaking Swiss to gently poke fun at the Swiss Germans. One of the strong points of Swiss humour is that it can be read in two ways, as such making it universal.

A. CHARBONNET, ATHENS,
GREECE

Bell-ringing

Your article in the August issue about bell-ringing was fascinating. Another reason to tune in to Swiss radio.

J. GRIFFITH, LIVERPOOL,
GREAT BRITAIN

Outlooks and insights

As a Swiss person abroad (20 years in Germany), I read the printed version of "Swiss Review" and enjoy sharing it with my family. We then pass it on to other people or simply leave it on our reading desk for guests. As you cannot always access the computer, I carry "Swiss Review" in my briefcase so I can read it whenever I want.

The printed version of the magazine may cost more and be less environmentally friendly, but it does have a much greater impact and attracts a significantly larger readership. There are insights as well as outlooks.

D. BIANCONI, OBERSCHÖLLENBACH,
GERMANY

Good for Swiss grey matter

"Which famous character was created by the Swiss author Johanna Spyri?" This is the type of question you will find in the parlour game Helvetiq. The answer is, of course, our very own Heidi. You will also discover where the artistic movement of Dadaism was born (Zurich) and which 19th-century Russian author lost a fortune at the casino in Saxon (Dostoevsky). Hadi Barkat, a graduate of the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), came up with the idea for the game whilst going through the naturalisation process. This entrepreneur, investor and engineer from the canton of Vaud lives in both Boston and Switzerland. While the game was originally designed to help future applicants for naturalisation to prepare for communal interviews, its

creators quickly realised that Swiss people would also be interested in playing the game to satisfy their appetite for knowledge about Switzerland. Helvetiq's red box contains two games – a quiz and a politics game. The quiz is a small board game, illustrated with a traditional "poya" scene of cows climbing to the mountain pastures. There are 150 cards which contain two questions, one on either side, with one side giving the answer to the other. For example: "Which famous Swiss sweet was introduced in the 1930s by the company Suchard?" And on the reverse side: "Which Swiss company launched the Sugus sweet on the market?" After answering the question, the player throws between one and three dice, depending on the risk incurred and the validity of the answer. In the politics game, each player represents a political movement and attempts to increase his or her influence by entering positions of power in the executive, legislative and judiciary bodies at communal, cantonal and federal level. The winner is the player who climbs the highest up the political ladder.

A fair amount of time is required to learn the rules and how to play the game. A visit to the www.helvetiq.ch website, which offers tips in video format, is recommended. After playing a game, you will begin to understand the strategies and finer points of the game to become a master of the tactics of political gamesmanship. It is a matter of manoeuvring five pieces to climb the rungs of the Swiss political system. You will need votes, special cards and laws, avoiding referenda and relying on initiatives, to score maximum points.

You don't have to be of voting age to play Helvetiq. The quiz can be played by 2 to 4 players aged 8 and above, and the politics game by 3 or 4 players aged 10 and above. The game is also aimed at communes and cantons to prepare new voters for citizenship, to foster the integration of immigrants or to provide a tool to support the naturalisation procedure. The game has been an immediate success with more than 7000 sets already having been sold in French-speaking Switzerland. It is set to be equally well received in German-speaking Switzerland, where it has been available for several months. Available in French, German, Italian and English, Helvetiq can be ordered on the www.helvetiq.ch website.