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■ Did you say Jurassic?

Almost 8,000 new **dinosaur tracks** have been discovered at Courtedoux in the Canton of Jura. The site is four times bigger (4,000 m²) than the one discovered in 2002. Dating back around 152 million years, the tracks measure up to 80 cm in diameter.

■ The **Dalai Lama** attracted a full house on 4 and 5 August at the Malley ice rink in Lausanne. Almost 13,000 spectators from across Switzerland and Europe squeezed in to hear a series of teachings and conferences on the art of happiness. As the visit was made on religious grounds, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate was not received by a member of the Federal Council.

■ Recognised cases of A (H1N1) **influenza** topped the 500 mark in Switzerland in August. Three hundred of the victims were infected on trips abroad and around 100 in Switzerland. While these figures are very low, it has not prevented a media frenzy or stopped people from buying protective masks en masse. Assuming swine flu hits Switzerland on the same scale as in Mexico, the number of Swiss infected would only be just over a thousand.

■ The **devastating hail storm** of 23 July caused half a billion francs' worth of damage in Switzerland. Harvests were destroyed, cars dented and the façades of houses bombarded with hail stones the size of golf balls. The steep repair bill and the work involved inspired a light-hearted response from Patrick Lucca of the Swiss Trade Association. He said:

"The department of defence is the best – the other departments pore over files, while we deal with tanks and aircraft."

Ueli Maurer, Federal Councillor and Minister of Defence

"If it came down to a choice between higher health insurance premiums and benefit restrictions, the people would support price increases."

Pascal Couchepin, Federal Councillor and Interior Minister

"From the European Union's perspective, Switzerland's intellectual and innovative prowess would certainly represent an enrichment."

Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, German Minister for Economic Affairs

"I love the 1st of August. But there are far fewer flags and lanterns hanging from the windows on this day of patriotic celebration than during football tournaments."

Suzette Sandoz, former Liberal National Councillor and professor of law

"The Rütli Oath tells you that we don't need or want big chiefs in Switzerland."

Peter von Matt, professor of literature, in his 1 August speech on the Rütli

"Switzerland was not an idyll during the Second World War. If you want to understand what everyday life was like back then, you cannot dismiss the fear of a genuine threat."

François de Capitani, historian and curator at the Swiss National Museum, on the television series "Alpenfestung" (Alpine Fortress)

"The government's image is not the same everywhere: in French-speaking Switzerland cantonal councillors are seen as bigwigs, while in Central Switzerland they are seen as colleagues who also go to the town hall as a secondary duty."

Rainer Schweizer, professor of public law at the University of St. Gallen

"The Swiss, Danes and Norwegians work the most. These are also the countries with the lowest unemployment figures and where workers earn the most."

Beat Kappeler, publicist



■ Hugo Loetscher, the Zurich-born author, has died at the age of 79. After the loss of Dürrenmatt and Frisch, this eternal traveller was the last remaining giant in Swiss literature. Editor of *Weltwoche* from 1964, the double Schiller Prize winner was the author of "Abwässer" (Drainwater, 1963) and "Der Immune" (The Immune Man, 1975). Published in August, his last book, "War meine Zeit meine Zeit" (Was My Time My Time), is a literary legacy.

"The weather has granted us a 4th economic recovery programme."

■ The Swiss team won three gold medals, two silver and four bronze at the **World Orienteering Champion-**

ships in Miskolc, Hungary. Simone Niggli-Luder and Daniel Hubmann both won the main long distance race.

■ The Swiss government has sold its **CHF 6 billion**

stake in UBS. By divesting the convertible bond underwritten in October 2008 to save the bank from ruin, the federal government has got its investment back in full and made a profit of CHF 1.2 billion. That is an annual return of more than 30% in eight months.

■ Switzerland and the USA have reached an extrajudicial agreement in principle concerning the **US tax authorities'** case against UBS. Switzerland's leading bank is to provide data on 4,450 American clients who are likely to face prosecution for tax fraud. The US judicial authorities had been demanding the names of 52,000 American clients suspected of tax evasion. The negotiations carried out by the Swiss government cost the country almost CHF 40 million in administrative costs, which are once again to be met by the taxpayer.

■ Are **Swiss roads** safer? This is debatable as "boy racer" accidents always seem to be in the news. However, the number of traffic accidents last year fell to its lowest level since 1945. There were 63 times fewer cars on the road back then and the population of Switzerland was just 4.5 million.

■ The mounted police have returned to Berne every summer since 1985. The traditional **equestrian patrols**, established in 1914 for the city's national exhibition, are not just a tourist attraction. On horseback, police officers are at the perfect height for surveillance in crowds or traffic. This mode of transport is also environmentally friendly.

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