

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 38 (2011)
Heft: 3

Anhang: Regional news : South Africa

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Mauritius : New Swiss Honorary Consul General

Congratulations to Mr Adrien Wehrli, new Swiss Consul General for the Republic of Mauritius, who has been nominated by the Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in Berne and has received the approval by the Government of Mauritius on 20th April 2011.

Mr Wehrli, partner in a chartered account firm is based in Quatre Bornes. The Embassy welcomes Mr. Wehrli as a new member of the Swiss consular network and wishes him lots of success in his new function.

Mr. Wehrli succeeds to Consul General Christian Poncini, who held this function from 1998 until the end of 2010. The Embassy of Switzerland takes the opportunity to thank Mr. Poncini for his continued support and cooperation he has offered during his term and sends him the best wishes for his future success.

The new address of the Swiss representation in Mauritius is:

Consulate General of Switzerland
24 Avenue des
Hirondelles
Quatre Bornes

Tel./Fax.: + 230 427 55 07
Cell phone: + 230 750 05 01
E-mail: adrienw67@gmail.com
For registrations, passports, civil matters and legalizations contact directly the Embassy of Switzerland in Pretoria, South Africa:
Tel. +27 12 452 0660
Fax +27 12 346 2605
eMail: pre.vertretung@eda.admin.ch
www.eda.admin.ch/pretoria

Retirement

After 34 years at the service of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Swiss Ambassador Rudolf Baerfuss has opted for a slightly advanced retirement, beginning on June 1, 2011. He has left South Africa early May and, with his wife Beatrice, has settled down in Berne/Switzerland.

They look back on an exciting

stay (2008 to 2011) in South Africa with a series of high level bilateral contacts, with peaceful elections in April 2009, with the start of the new government and finally the great success of the FIFA Soccer World Cup with the participation of the Swiss National team (by the way the only team to beat the later world champion).

Mr Baerfuss and his wife had the opportunity to meet many of the Swiss compatriots in different regions of this big and beautiful country South Africa and also in the other fascinating countries where he is accredited, namely Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia and Swaziland. The retiring couple sends warm greetings and best wishes to all the members of the Swiss colonies in these countries and thanks them for their welcome, their support and their friendship. They take lovely memories back to Switzerland.

Ambassador Baerfuss wishes to extend his sincere thanks also to the superb team at the Embassy in Pretoria, to the efficient Consulate General in Cape Town and to our dedicated honorary consular representatives in Durban, Gaborone, Port Louis and Windhoek.

Upon the arrival of the new Ambassador, the Embassy is headed by newly arrived Counsellor Heinrich Maurer, Deputy Head of Mission, as Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

Welcome to all Swiss abroad who now receive consular support from the Swiss Embassy/Consulate-General in South Africa

In the last Swiss Review (March 2011), you were advised that the consular section based in Harare which used to service Swiss Abroad living in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi, had been closed, and that these people would in future receive consular services from South Africa. Similarly, last year, the facilities in Angola and those in Mauritius were closed, and again the Swiss Abroad living there are receiving consular services from South Africa.

As your two Ausland-schweizerrat Delegates from Southern Africa, Rolf Schudel and the author of this article, Peter Muller, we welcome all Swiss Abroad who have "joined" the consular district of South

Africa. We are here to serve you, and to make appropriate representations to the relevant authorities in Switzerland whenever or wherever you encounter problems in your rights, privileges, duties and opportunities as a Swiss citizen or dual-national living in the 11 countries comprising Southern Africa, which are now all serviced from the consular district based in the Embassy and Consulates-General in Pretoria and Cape Town. The eleven countries are: South Africa, Mauritius, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho.

This is an open invitation to all readers of the Swiss Review to contact us at any time in regard to anything that may be troubling you in your liaison with Switzerland as a Swiss citizen or dual-national living abroad. Our contact co-ordinates are to be found in a "boxed space" elsewhere in these local pages. We look forward to hearing from you.

Lots of feedback

The feedback from you over the past twelve months has increased tremendously, and we wish to thank you for this. Amongst the major topics troubling Swiss in Southern Africa are the following: opening and maintaining bank accounts, exorbitant bank charges unilaterally levied by some Swiss banks on foreign address bank clients, lists of banks not levying such charges, registering and problems with the Swiss AHV/IV, maintenance and payments with the Swiss Medical Insurance Scheme (KVG), professional apprenticeships in Switzerland,

university studies in Switzerland as well as military service possibilities.

In many of the cases or queries brought to our attention, we have been able to clarify the situation or even assist successfully. Sometimes, this is not possible. For instance, the closure of consulates and consulates-general has seriously inconvenienced some Swiss living in Southern Africa. The appointment of Honorary Consuls-General is not an adequate substitute for this, as they have such very limited powers themselves, that they can merely act as a local conduit for problems, and possibly as a local physical presence that Switzerland as a country is still around and very discreetly visible at the official level.

Closures of consulates

These closures have not only taken place in Southern Africa, but world-wide. Important countries for Switzerland such as Germany and Hungary, to mention only two both in the EU and in Western and Eastern Europe respectively, have protested very vociferously against important closures in cities such as Hamburg and Budapest to no avail. According to the Dept. of Foreign Affairs (EDA) in Bern, these closures are being made as part of a rationalisation and economy drive. It is no surprise that the EDA always appears to make "savings" at the expense of the Swiss Abroad. Three years ago, for instance, this magazine Swiss Review was "axed" from 6 to 4 issues annually in a totally unilateral, non-communicative manner by the EDA, by reducing the budgetary allocation

Continued overleaf/...

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Continued from page 1
therefore by some CHF 500'000 per annum. And this at a time, when the numbers of Swiss Abroad are growing steadily! Switzerland as a small yet very influential European country that is not in the EU, needs more friends and important contacts than ever before in its history.

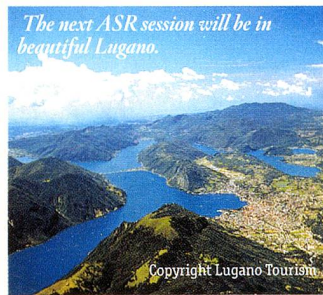
Peter Muller
ASR Delegate for Southern Africa

Report of the Auslandschweizererrat (asr) Spring Session In Brunnen

On Friday 8th April, the ASR, which as you know is the Parliament of the Swiss Abroad, met in Brunnen, Canton Schwyz, at the Hotel Waldstätterhof, where you also find the Auslandschweizerplatz, beautifully situated as the start or end of the historic "Weg der Schweiz" on the lakefront in Brunnen.

It was a day showing off Switzerland at its best! A warm sunny Spring day, with the snow-covered alpine peaks in the background, and in the foreground a crystal clear Urnersee, framed by flashes of brilliant floral Spring colours. A day to remember, not only because of the climatic and scenic beauty, but particularly also because the ASR was celebrating the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Auslandschweizerplatz alongside the Hotel Waldstätterhof in 1991.

The Auslandschweizererrat has 130 members including the Inland-Swiss contingent. Some 75 attended this historic meeting from all corners of the globe. President Eggly welcomed one and all, and then proceeded to deliver his report on ASR and



Auslandschweizerorganisation (ASO) activities in the 6 month period since the last meeting in St. Gallen last August.

e-consulate and m-consulate

One of the main points of concern was, and is, the indiscriminate closure of consulates and consulates-general world-wide. While the e-consulate (electronic consulate) as well as the m-consulate (mobile consulate), are programmed for the future, and there is a drive to appoint Honorary Consuls world-wide, this can only be a poor and inadequate substitute for a fully fledged consulate with full local competence and authority, staffed by trained professional staff, who can expedite business speedily, and act as friendly advisors and "ambassadors" for Switzerland. It should also be remembered that many people, particularly many elderly Swiss Abroad, do not yet have a PC or access to one.

Ambassador Brügger from the Dept. of Foreign Affairs (EDA) then delivered an address on this matter of "closures". Needless to say, the debate following his speech was robust and often highly critical of the EDA's policy and actions. Ambassador Brügger assured the meeting that he had made a note of all the points raised, and that he would transmit same to the

powers that be at the EDA. While this at least showed Ambassador Brügger's "goodwill", the author of this article, based on his past experience of dealing with the EDA, does not expect that anything much will change.

The progress of e-voting

Thereafter, Mrs Weber from the Federal Chancellery (Bundeskanzlei) in Bern addressed the meeting on the progress of e-voting (electronic voting) project. Assuming that the Federal Council (Bundesrat) approves the request in June 2011, it should be possible for some 20'000 voting-registered Swiss Abroad world-wide from the cantons of Aargau, St. Gallen, Graubünden and Basel-Stadt, to vote electronically by internet in the forthcoming general election in October this year. This is certainly a positive step forward and will go some way towards alleviating, or even eliminating, some of the negatives of the postal-vote that has been used since 1992. These were factors such as postal delays and non-delivery, as well as failure on the part of some Swiss Abroad to sign the

enclosed Voting ID (Stimmrechtsausweis). Regarding the security aspect of e-voting, Mrs Weber assured delegates that this was receiving top priority, and that the programme had been tested and received the stamp of approval by the ETH in Zürich.

Other interesting items on the agenda were the ASR annual report, accounts and budgets for 2011.

The next ASR session is on 26th August 2011 followed by the annual ASO congress in Lugano. We heartily invite you to attend if you are in or near Switzerland.

Peter Muller, ASR Delegate for Southern Africa



IMPRESSUM

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4/2011: deadline 5 Oct 2011,
distribution: 16 Nov 2011



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SWISS CLUB INFO AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

JOHANNESBURG

Swiss Society Helvetia, 31 Moerdyk Ave, Vorna Valley, Midrand, Chairman: Mario Valli, 082 451 8040; office: Debora Lanz, T/F 0118053039, C 0826516152, swissclubjhb@whoswho.co.za, Swiss Country Club Rest. «The Courier», Wolfgang Wollauz, T/F 0118053040, C 0825610063, Tue-Sat 11-21h30 Rest./kitchen, 11-24h Bar, Sun 10-17h, T/F 011 805 3040, C 082561 0063, www.dining-out.co.za «The Courier»

Our Clubs of Society: Afro Gugge, Amicale Suisse Romande, Boccia, Skitting Club.

Associated Groups: Swiss Choir, Swiss Rifle Club, Swiss Golf, G.S.N.A. Senior Swiss Circle meets every 2nd Saturday of the month for Lunch Swiss Ladies meet every 4th Thursday of the month for lunch; Evi Frei 011 673 464. It is hard to believe that we are virtually halfway into the New Year and that all the World Cup Hype is also already a year old and a thing of the past.

Our AGM in April was attended by 25 members with quite a large number of apologies. The Committee has been re-elected unanimously, bar the Treasurer who tendered his resignation prior to the AGM. So – once again we are in dire need of a Treasurer and would thus welcome anybody who would be able and willing to assist with this important function, which we just cannot be without. All the painstaking and hard ground work to reinstate an up to date version of Pastel Software among many other things has been done by the outgoing Treasurer and it is now really a case of overseeing and maintaining this level of book keeping for our Club. We are even prepared to remunerate the person who would be able to assist, as we are convinced that there must be book keepers out there who may be retired, but would still like to keep “their minds occupied” with some really straight forward Treasurer tasks and possibly earn a bit of extra cash on the side? Your contact person is Debbie on 011-805 3039 from Monday to Friday between 10am and 3 pm.

2010 has definitely been a turnaround year for our Club and the Courier Restaurant bookings and functions for this year are looking very good well into September as well, which is very encouraging indeed. Remember that you can now visit our own website (www.swissclubjhb.co.za) which will provide useful information and links you may want to share with your visitors, friends and business associates, who may not have been out to the Club yet, as well as checking on news updates and forthcoming events which are planned at the Club!

Some of the planned events which you might want to diarise:

- JUNE – KARAOKE EVENING – WE DARE YOU TO GIVE IDOLS A CHALLENGE! (Dates will be on the Website)
- JULY – EISBEIN MONTH
- JULY TO SEPTEMBER – FONDUE EVENINGS (Dates will be on the Website)
- SUNDAY 31st JULY – SWISS NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS
- SEPTEMBER – METZGETE MONTH (Dates will be on the Website)

PRETORIA

Swiss Embassy 0124520660, Swiss Society Alpina, Hans-Georg Bosch, President, T 0123478310, C 0825510222, swissclub.pta@hbosch.com, Biffy van Rooyen, Secretary, swissclub.pta@hbosch.com

The AGM took place on 18 February 2011 at the Swiss Club in Vorna Valley; it was attended by 23 members. It was a lively and participative event at which club events were discussed in detail.

The Swiss Society Helvetia at their recent AGM has elected Prisca Marais-Schleiffer as new Beisitzer. Darius Boshoff has rescinded his committee seat due to work pressure. The rest of the committee has been re-elected.

Calendar of events for 2011
Fondue: 18 June at the Johannes Kirche church hall (next to DSP);
1. August event: 30 July at Fountains Valley

CAPE TOWN

Swiss Consulate General
T 0214183665,
Swiss Social&Sports Club,
Nick Eppenberger, Nicky Rodrigues
T 0722185759,
membership secretary:
eppenberger@telkomsa.net,
www.swissclub.co.za

Our AGM was held on the 24th March and concluded with a streamlined committee team. After serving for 18 years in the committee Alois Koch resigned from the committee. Nik Eppenberger handed over the membership portfolio. Pascal Kilchenmann and Ernst Tobler have also resigned from the committee, but will continue to serve on the House committee.

The new committee members are as follows:
President: Michael Hauser,
Vice President: Stefan Rüsi,
Secretary: Nicky Rodrigues,
Membership: Andre Häberli and
Treasurer: Annette Weber.

The Jonkershoek campsite will be managed by a subcommittee led by René Bützer.

Non committee members with important functions: Website: Hans Kunz & Editor: Barend van As.

Ernest & Hedi Buerki and their team had once again a great stand at this year's Community Chest Carnival. Over the four day period they sold thousands of Rosenkuchen and contributed to the success of this charity event.

Claus Goldbeck was introduced as the new caterer, with Stephen Nortje as the chef. With only a few meals cooked to date, their culinary skills have surpassed them. Join them on Tuesdays to Sundays – it is advisable to confirm ahead.

The rain on Easter Sunday may have kept a few in bed and away from Jonkerhoek, but not the Easter Bunny, who arrived in style (Lindt Smart Car) with the goodies for the kids.

Browse our website
www.swissclub.co.za for forthcoming events and events from our subsections (Cycle, Rifle and Frauentreffen)

SWISS CLUB NATAL

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C 083 262 6107, hansg@saol.com;
Philippe Lanz, Secretary,
pl@swisscontact.co.za,
C 082 4932673

Following the program for the Swiss Club Natal:
JASS EVENINGS: Westville Country, Club Link Road, Westville (first road on the left when travelling from the Pavillion N3 exit towards Westville). As before, the Jass evening takes place every second Friday evening of the month at 19h00. The dates for 2011 are: 8/07, 12/08, 9/09, 14/10, 11/11, 9/12/2011 (price Jassen).
TARGET SHOOTING PRACTICE starting at 9h00: Dave Nicol Shooting Range, Nottingham Rd/KZN Midrand: 25/06, 23/07, 27/08, 24/09, 22/10, 19-20/11 National Championship CTN-JHB-NTL, 26/11, 3/12/2011. Note there are exiting new events with prices eg Hand Gun Competition, Introduction into Arch Bow Sport, Boar Shoot, Chamois Buck Shoot etc. Detailed program is available from the secretary.
OTHER EVENTS: Cheese Fondue Evening: 2/07/2011, Swiss National Day: 31/07/2011, Green Bowling: 21/08/2011, 16/10/2011, Ten Pin Bowling: 20/11/2011, Years end Braai: 11/12/2011. Culture Evening (Swiss Film Abend): 21/01/2012, AGM 4/03/2012.

SWISS CLUBS EASTERN CAPE

Port Elizabeth

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MAURITIUS

Club Suisse de Maurice, Secrétariat: Alois Fürer, Comet Street 19, Roches Brunes, Beau-Bassin, T 466-2014 fureralois@intnet.mu

Le comité du club a le plaisir de vous informer : La fête nationale du 1er Août 2011 aura lieu au < Centre Nautilus > a Albion. Une invitation suivra pour tous nos membres. Renseignement par le président Fürer Alois +230 466 20 14



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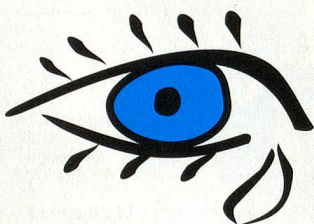
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