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■ The book “**Glaciers**, passé-présent du Rhône au Mont-Blanc” (Glaciers – Past and Present from the Rhône to Mont-Blanc) unsurprisingly reveals that some vast alpine glaciers have lost up to 50% of their surface over the past 150 years. The effect of global warming is three times greater at altitude than the European average.

■ Voting on the **revision of unemployment insurance**: the poor turnout (35.5%) allowed cuts to social unemployment benefits to go through unhindered, with 53.4% in favour.

■ Having just been elected, the **new Federal Council** experienced its first crisis when allocating departments. Tributes were paid to outgoing councillors. Doris Leuthard is leaving Economic Affairs to take over the reins at the Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications. As for Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, she is leaving Justice to take over at Finance. The newcomers have inherited the vacant posts. Free Democrat Johann Schneider-Ammann is delighted to get Economic Affairs, while Social Democrat Simonetta Sommaruga has settled for the Department of Justice and Police.

■ The **Cardinal** brewery in Fribourg will close its doors in June 2011. In response to the demands of the Danish Carlsberg group, Feldschlösschen has announced that production of Switzerland's second most popular beer will be relocated to Rheinfelden (Aargau). Fourteen years ago, when it found itself in dire straits, this symbol of Fribourg was saved thanks to unprecedented popular and political support. This time, it's the end.

■ **Steve Lee** (aged 47), the singer in the band Gotthard, has been killed in a road accident near

*“I would recommend every woman to find a husband who does military service. Anything else is a bit like shopping in a discount store. You never really know what you are getting.”*

Ueli Maurer, Federal Councillor and Minister of Defence

*“Whether Tell lived or not is irrelevant. What matters is that we discover Tell and his values in ourselves – responsibility, courage and independence.”*

Thomas Maissen, historian

*“Along with Japan, Switzerland is the safest country in the world. Our system of criminal law is very effective. Despite the death penalty, criminality is higher in the USA than in Switzerland.”*

Marcel Niggli, Professor of Criminal Law at the University of Fribourg

*“The Swiss postal service is one of the best in the world. No other postal service in Europe ensures that 98% of letters are delivered on time.”*

Jürg Bucher, CEO of Swiss Post

*“Look in the Larousse encyclopaedia where people are ‘canonised’. Ziegler comes immediately after Zidane, the football star.”*

Jean Ziegler, politician, author, UN Special Rapporteur

*“First and foremost, I am a confederate. Anyone can become Swiss, but not a confederate.”*

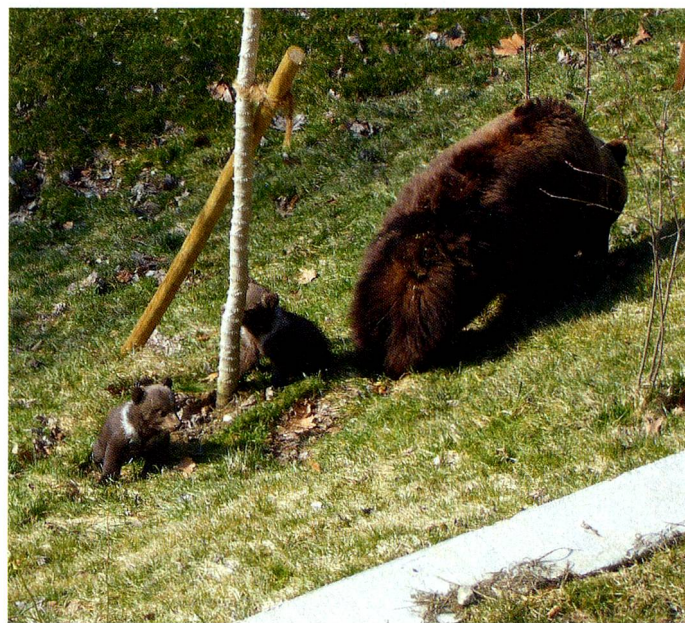
Christian Stucki, a top Swiss wrestler

*“My dream is of a beautiful African-Swiss girl who is a member of Amnesty International, campaigns for fair trade and can yodel.”*

Peter Rothenbühler, on the issue of Miss Switzerland

*“I showed my most beautiful films of hundreds of thousands of starlings in the sky to the gentlemen of the Rotary Club and said: ‘You have a responsibility, you have to act!’”*

Andreas Moser, biologist and wildlife filmmaker



The new Bear Park in Berne attracted almost 2.4 million visitors in the space of one year. At 250,000, visitor numbers were at their peak in April and August. Numbers increased tenfold thanks to the birth of the cubs Ursina and Berna.

Las Vegas in the USA. At the forefront of Swiss hard rock, the band has sold more than two million albums worldwide.

■ Before stepping down from his position as **Federal Councillor**, **Hans-Rudolf Merz** gained ground in the struggle over tax-

ation between Switzerland and the European Union. Germany and the UK accept the principle of a source tax on assets deposited in Switzerland by persons domiciled in those two countries. For the time being, banking confidentiality is intact.

■ The Federal Council's Expert Committee has put forward a series of measures aimed at strengthening the equity capital of **UBS and Credit Suisse**. If introduced, the measures will cost the two banks CHF 75 billion. Analysts hope the measures will enter into force in 2013.

■ **The 2010 Human Development Index** published by the UN ranks Switzerland in thirteenth position. The “quality of life” award goes to Norway, Australia, New Zealand and the USA.

■ In Thun (Berne), tightrope walker **Freddy Nock** crossed from the town's church to the castle on a high wire strung 30 metres above the ground: a distance of 320 metres. In April he set his sixth world record, walking 900 metres to cross Lake Zurich's harbour.

■ Of the 73 million visitors to the World Expo in Shanghai, 2.7 million visited the **Swiss pavilion**. It was even listed as one of the ten best stands by the press agency China News. The only downside was the continual breakdown of the chairlift.

■ The procedure for purchasing new **fighter planes** has already cost CHF 50 to 100 million without any decision being made. The Federal Council has postponed the partial replacement of the Tiger fleet, which will probably take place in 2015. However, the FA-18s can easily be used until 2025/2030.

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