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# REGIONAL NEWS UNITED STATES

## Editorial

### Dear Readers in the United States

Like everywhere in the United States, the first Christmas decorations on the houses go up during Thanksgiving weekend. And then every day there are a few more. It's the first sign that Christmastime is arriving. But for many of us, the real Christmas season starts at Swiss Park when the Matterhorn Young Swiss Society has their Samichlaus party with lunch, followed in the afternoon by the Christmas Concert from the Swiss Singing Society Harmonie. For once, we would like to tell you more about it on pages 6-7.



More than 20 years ago I saw Goldi's model train masterwork for the first time. For several years now I had been telling him that I would like to write an article and take some pictures for Swiss Review. Last week I called because I had realized that I was going to have enough space. Unfortunately, Goldi said that a large part of the set was being dismantled, that I was too late. I was so sorry that I had procrastinated and went on and on lamenting, until Goldi said he did have a lot of pictures, so here goes. Read it all on page 8.

And last but not least I want to make you aware that Swiss Review has modernized its layout. I hope you like it as much as I do.

Wishing all of you a very Happy and Healthy New Year!

WAL BAUR  
wbaur@roadrunner.com

## Colorado Swiss, not Swedish

As part of coming up with ideas for fundraising for our Swiss Club, we came up with this t-shirt. Well, it's turned out to be a great one and people love it, so I thought that other Swiss might be interested. Since there is no Colorado Springs specific notation, it would work anywhere.

The pictures attached are of myself, and I'm wearing a small, and I usually wear a size 6. Price \$ 20.00. For more info contact:

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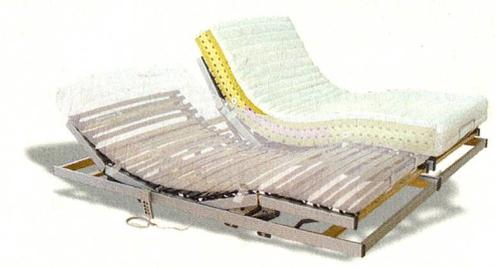
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*Washington, DC*  
**5th Annual Manufacturing Summit 2011 on High Tech Skilled Jobs and Apprenticeship**

**Jobs Summit on Attracting and Maintaining a Highly Skilled Workforce and the Swiss Model for Competing on a Global Level in the Manufacturing Industry, joined by the White House & U.S. Army Reserves**

Concerned for the future of manufacturing jobs, Swiss and US industry leaders of small and medium sized enterprises joined

unemployed but skilled jobs still remain unfilled. This conference showcases the Swiss system of apprenticeship as a model for creating and developing the workforce skills needed in the U.S., with more than 200 job categories and most Swiss businesses participating. Speakers and attendees at The Manufacturing Summit agreed that increasing and investing in standardized certification programs for apprenticeship in the U.S. – like those created by The National Institute for Metalworking Skills and endorsed by The National Association of Manufacturers – will help alleviate the skills

The Manufacturing Summit, she was pleased to report that in the past year 112 new apprenticeship programs were established across the country, and renewed her call to action to promote the truly sophisticated nature of manufacturing today and its “re-birth in the 21st Century.”

Collectively, conference attendees recognized that reaching out to America’s youth and providing training opportunities at an early age are key factors in the effort to rebuild and maintain a highly skilled workforce.

Martin von Walterskirchen, Director Americas of Switzerland Trade & Investment Promotion, said “We must work with the student, the company and the

parents to ensure success in training and skills.”

Speaking for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Dr. Margot Daniels-Tyler emphasized, “The talent is here. It is a matter of finding it.” The Gates Millennium Scholars Program provides scholarships to do just that, discovering and investing in youth. Dr. Tyler issued a challenge to the audience by asking, “How many of you are mentoring



Jane Oates, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor, speaking at the Manufacturing Summit. She was pleased to report that in the past year 112 new apprenticeship programs were established across the country.



Daniel Bangser, Trade Commissioner and Director North America-Investment, Switzerland Trade & Investment Promotion, Daniel Küng, CEO of OSEC Business Network Switzerland and Minister Martin von Walterskirchen, Director Americas of Switzerland Trade & Investment Promotion.

together with the White House, U.S. Army Reserves and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation at the 5th Annual Manufacturing Summit in Washington DC, organized by Switzerland Trade & Investment Promotion.

More than 150 business, community college, and workforce development leaders attended. Speakers addressed standards to ease transitions within and between industries; opportunities to foster excellence through apprenticeship; and how to develop effective partnerships to mitigate the skills gap and improve the public perception of manufacturing.

It’s all about creating jobs, a hot topic now when so many are

shortage here and shore up the jobs pipeline within the manufacturing sector.

An example of the Swiss apprenticeship model being used in the U.S. is the N.G. Hayek Watchmaking School in Miami, Florida. It subscribes to a new program for returning veterans called “The Veteran Watchmaker Initiative: Educating Soldiers, Securing Futures.” At no cost, accepted students undertake a two-year WOSTEP certified program that provides all of the required elements to obtain a watchmaker certificate and potentially a well-paying job for life.

One strong advocate for apprenticeship is Jane Oates, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor. At

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Don Graves, Executive Director of the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness, The White House

facilitate these connections, The Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces. "Find ways to build the future," added Don Graves, Executive Director of the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness. As he offered a report from the White House, Graves said "The

a 7th or 8th grader?" In light of the thousands of returning veterans, Major General Keith Thurgood, Deputy Commanding General, Support of the U.S. Army Reserves, addressed the growth of public-private partnerships to connect businesses with results-oriented skilled veterans from all branches of the military. Major General Thurgood urged manufacturers to join a new initiative to

issues, the ideas you are discussing, are of the utmost importance. Without growing the manufacturing sector, without growing jobs, this economy will fail." Graves further explained 17 recent tax cuts for small businesses, where manufacturing companies are the target for state credit initiatives. Given the urgent demand for high tech skilled workers and the potential economic impact,

one industry leader asked Mr. Graves if the White House would establish a cabinet-level Secretary of Manufacturing. Why is Switzerland interested in the U.S. manufacturing sector? As Daniel Küng, CEO of OSEC Business Network Switzerland explained, "As the second largest foreign investor in the U.S. manufacturing sector, Switzerland is firmly committed to supporting American manufacturing. We believe our expertise in creating apprenticeship can be a successful model for generating the skills needed to fill manufacturing jobs in the U.S." Apprenticeship supports a healthy manufacturing sector,



Major General Thurgood urged manufacturers to join a new initiative to facilitate connections with the employer partnership of the Armed Forces.

which in turn supports a healthy economy and creates jobs.

DANIEL BANGSER  
Trade Commissioner and Director North America - Investment, Switzerland Trade & Investment Promotion, Consulate General of Switzerland in New York.

For more information, go to [www.TheManufacturingSummit.com](http://www.TheManufacturingSummit.com)

All pictures by Keri Douglas



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*North Carolina  
News from the Swiss  
Society of Charlotte*

The Annual Meeting and 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of our club on November 5<sup>th</sup> 2011, was a hit with over 60 people attending. The Hilton Hotel executive Swiss Chef, Mario Thom, had prepared an outstanding menu from "Bündner Gerstensuppe", "Züri Gschnätzlet's" with "Spätzli" to "Fleischvögel" and "Polenta", desserts and more. Our Consul General of Switzerland from Atlanta, Mr. Claudio Leoncavallo and his wife Monique joined us for this special event. They had brought some Swiss Fondant and Pinot Noir, which were greatly appreciated (and consumed of course) with the appetizers consisting of "Bündnerfleisch", "Prociutto", "Landjäger", various Swiss cheeses and green salads;



Mr. Claudio Leoncavallo, Consul General of Switzerland from Atlanta, and his wife Monique (left) joined Walter Hess, Swiss Society President, and his wife Madeleine for this special event.

thank you again Claudio for the wonderful wines! All in all, a great evening that ended with a super raffle and prizes to close out the night.

On a sunny Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup> was our family afternoon with Santa Claus at the Jetton Park in Cornelius. Santa was busy giving encouragements or reproaches to the children but at the end, Schmutzli and he were



Santa was busy giving encouragements or reproaches to the children but at the end, Schmutzli and he were giving out the long anticipated "Gritibänze", clementines, candies and nuts.

handing out the long anticipated "Gritibänze" together with clementines, candy and nuts. Everyone enjoyed the traditional barley soup and hot chocolate. A big thank you goes to the board and volunteers for doing an excellent job.

For further information on upcoming events and so see more pictures, visit us on our Website: [www.swisscharlotte.com](http://www.swisscharlotte.com).

We are all looking forward to seeing you at one of our activities and would like to hear from you.

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*New York  
Sustainable  
Hospitality: Green  
Innovation in Practice*

Sustainability and green solutions are topics of high interest to many businesses in the 21st century. The same applies to the hospitality industry. On both sides of the Atlantic, many experts in this field are working on innovations which can reduce the carbon footprint of this industry. This is why on November 11, the Ecole Hôtelière de

Lausanne (EHL) together with the Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism, and Sports Management of the New York University and the Swiss Consulate General in New York organized a panel discussion with the title "Sustainable Hospitality: Green Innovation in Practice" in New York. The aim of the event was to bring together experts from the US and Switzerland and to discuss the important challenges that the hospitality industry faces today.

Approximately 150 professors,

students and entrepreneurs attended the event. Speakers on the panel were representatives of universities, professors and students of EHL and NYU. Next to discussing different ideas and approaches to sustainable hotel business, the panelists and the audience agreed that making the industry more green and sustainable was the right and necessary path. Not only because of social responsibility, but guests also increasingly care about an ecological way of traveling.

This event followed the recent creation of EHL's New York-Lausanne Society. The aim of this association is to promote academic and economic collaboration and exchange in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry between Switzerland and the US.

COSIMA BADER

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Photo: NYU-SCPS Tisch Center



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### Matterhorn Young Swiss Club

#### Samichlaus Party

The Santa Party has been a long standing event for the Matterhorn Young Swiss Club, trying to keep a Swiss tradition of Samichlaus who arrives on December 6<sup>th</sup>, sometimes with a donkey and in some parts of Switzerland with Schmutzli, reminding the children that Christmas is coming. He also knows a lot about each child, good and not so good habits and Schmutzli (the enforcer) will threaten the really unruly boys with a trip deep into the forest, or he may leave a switch instead



Alana with Santa



Avery with Santa-Daddy



Natalia



Singing for Santa: Dylan, Manuel, Luca, Remy, Christoph, Kent, and the girl Vanessa

of treats. Gifts on that day are not part of Santa's job, only a bag with peanuts, walnuts, "Manderinli," some chocolate candy, a "Gritti-bänz" and maybe a small toy are given to good children. For many years we were lucky to have the perfect Samichlaus, Freddy Burri, who is well known for having been the Disneyland Matterhorn Yodeler when it opened. The children adored him as he had just the right touch of sternness and kindness. When he was unavailable due to family reunions in Switzerland, we had to look for substitutes. Most were o.k. One was a big disappointment, especially when he paid no attention to the notes that the parents had submitted and kept asking

the children what they wanted for Christmas, just like the mall Santas.

Well, luck was on our side when one of our Matterhorn members offered to be Santa and with Urs Pesko we hit the jackpot. He too has just the right touch, talking to the children about their shortcomings, praising their accomplishments and never embarrassing them. He can speak to the children in English or Swiss German and several of them will have a song or a poem to recite for him.

I dare say that many of our members and friends look forward to this event as it really puts you in the Christmas spirit. Of course the beautiful homemade cookies baked by the ladies add the festive touch and



Kent



Luca



Veronica on Santa's lap



Santa saying good-bye. In the back, with white blouse, Lilo Holzer who organizes the event each year.

the Christmas carols, in German and English make everybody feel a little nostalgic. Most of the children are grandchildren of our members and we have had as many as four generations enjoying the great buffet lunch and a visit from Samichlaus at Swiss Park.

PICTURES: BAUMGARTNER, PESKO AND ZIMMERLI FAMILIES

TEXT: LILO HOLZER

liloholzer@att.net

### Swiss Singing Society Harmonie

#### Christmas Concert

With a group of about 80 Senior Citizens bused in by a Tour company, the Matterhorn Room at Swiss Park was nearly bursting at the seams! 310 persons made their way past the three raffle tables laden down with prizes and prizes and more prizes! The hall was decked in its Christmas finest with Christmas tree, table center pieces, pine twigs on each table, peanuts and mandarins so the guests would not starve. The bar was doing a booming business and there was a real traffic jam by the raffle tables.

Punctually at 4 pm the lights were dimmed and with their Alphorns Nelly Wyss, her son Christoph and Franz Stadelmann made it known that the concert was to begin. When the curtains opened, the singers, all in their individual trachts, were



Franz Stadelmann, Christoph and Nelly Wyss announcing the concert with their Alphorns

standing on stage and Harmonie President Wal Baur was delighted to greet the large crowd, among them Swiss Consul General Bruno Ryff

and Tony Hartenstein, the long-time solo yodeler, accordionist and professional musician who, being over 90 years old, was for the first time just a spectator. The guest choir was the Corona del Mar Chancel Choir – our own director Rodger Whitten's church choir. For a change, Harmonie did not have a designated MC. This task was given to several of the younger choir members who did a splendid job. In the first part of the concert



Harmonie singing, everybody in their individual Swiss tracht. Rodger, the director, sitting at the piano.

Harmonie sang Weihnachtsglocken - Daheime - O Holy Night - Wenn ich ein Glöcklein wär (Soloists Heidi and Helen Jakob) and ended with Weihachtsfreude. As he does for every concert, Siegfried Heger had written a special poem "Children's Eyes" which he read. Then it was the turn of the Coronal del Mar Chancel Choir to sing Awake! Sing Gloria - The Most Wonderful Time of the Year - Festival Sanctus and Tiny Little Baby is Born. Intermission was the moment for the singers to mingle with the guests and for everybody to buy some more raffle tickets. Then the concert continued, with, to everybody's delight and sur-



The childrens choir under the direction of Ursula El-Tawansy was a surprise.

prise, a children's choir, directed by Ursula El-Tawansy. While a girl played the violin and the children sang several well know songs both in German and English, Christmas scenes and pictures were projected above their heads, thanks to a power point presentation by Max Bachmann and Alexander Bell. Before the singing continued, there was another surprise: Carina Smith, daughter of a Harmonie member, performed a tap dance called "It Snowed" – a splendid result after years of dancing lessons!

Harmonie continued with "Calypso Noel," soloists Siegfried Heger and Sabrina Salata. We were quite proud of our performance of this song; because when we started rehearsing (in August!!!) the unfamiliar Jamaican rhythms were hard for us. Next on the program was a French song "Le Message des Anges" and the English version "Angels We Have Heard on High." The guests were quite surprised when suddenly the Chancel Choir joined in, singing from high up on the balcony in the back. As one guest remarked: Singing in stereo!! Everybody then sang "Stille Nacht / Silent Night." But that was not the end

of the Concert. We had saved the best for last: Both choirs, now squeezed together on stage, with Rodger Whitten at the piano and at the same time directing, performed the Hallelujah Chorus from the Messiah by Georg Friedrich Händel. The standing ovation that followed proved that all the rehearsing had paid off!



The Corona del Mar Chancel Choir, singing from high above.

After the concert we raffled off the table decorations – a nice bag filled with nuts, mandarins and wonderful Christmas cookies, all homemade by many Harmonie members. Yes, we have multiple talents in our Choir!

Then it was on to a Christmas dinner, served by the Swiss Park Staff who had their hands full to deliver all the plates to so many tables: Green salad with beets, celery root, carrots, and tomatoes, served with herbed vinaigrette dressing, then roasted pork tenderloin with mushroom gravy, "spätzli" and a seasonal vegetable medley. Dessert was a lemon raspberry tart and of course coffee.

The evening ended with the event everybody had been waiting for: The raffle started. After each number called, you could hear a loud or more discreet cries of joy from the winners. Soon it was time to say good by - hope seeing you again next year!

We recorded this concert. For next Christmas a CD will be available. If you would like to listen to some of the songs, not the professional recorded version but nevertheless, you can visit the Harmonie web-site

at [www.swissharmonie.com](http://www.swissharmonie.com) and then click on PERFORMANCES 2011.



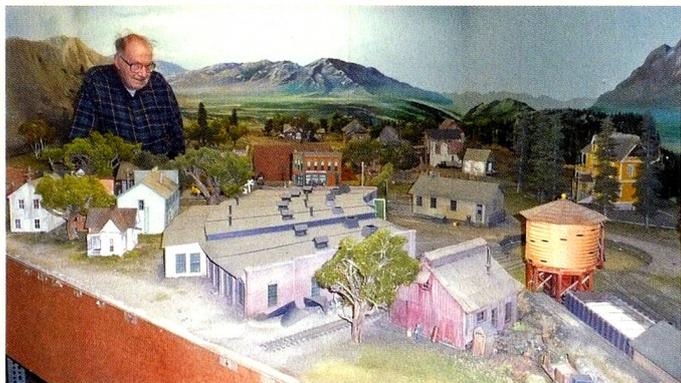
The Chancel Choir and Harmonie squeezed onto the stage for the final song: Händel's Hallelujah from the Messiah.

TEXT: WAL BAUR  
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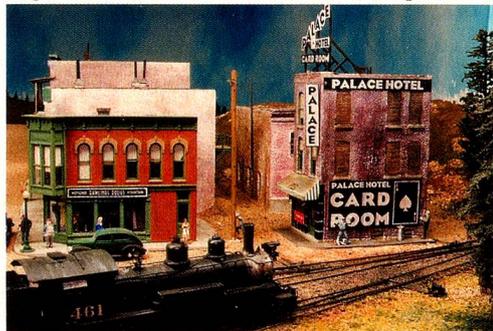
## Southern California Goldi's trains were al- ways on time

His real name is Gerold Merker, but to all of us he is simply Goldi, probably because of his always sunny disposition.



Goldi Merker, surrounded by a small part of his miniature train display

He grew up in Zurich where he got his first model train, a Märklin 0 gauge set at age 4. He obviously had no idea where that would take him. After an apprenticeship, a business school diploma and military service, his family sent him for six months to New York to learn English. He liked it, moved to LA



Who wouldn't want to spend some time at the Palace Hotel?

because his older brother lived there, married Heidi, settled down, joined an O Scale club and started acquiring Lobaugh and Max Gray locomotives. After several years the Merkers decided to have their own house

built. The contractor was a bit astonished that somebody in Los Angeles wished to have a 34 by 60 foot "hole in the ground." Heidi said the neighbors probably thought they were building an atomic shelter, as this

was in the sixties and the cold war was very much on peoples mind. But the basement couldn't have had a more peaceful purpose. Over the years, all three rooms became a railroad wonderland – a miniature of a real railroad that knowledgeable visitors could recognize as based on specific areas in Colorado.

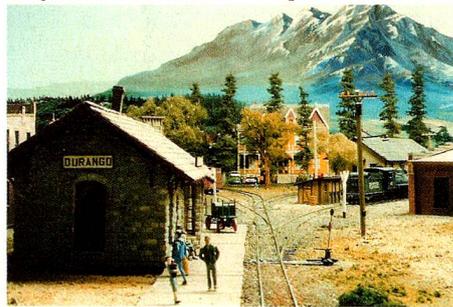
Ray Spencer, an artist working for Disney, painted most of the backdrops. Every track was laid by hand, every building lovingly assembled, bushes and trees made by gluing greenery on twigs to look like the real thing. Sometimes it's not easy to see the transition from the three-dimensional foreground to the painted backdrop. Goldi was really bitten by the railroad bug! He used to get up

at 3 in the morning to start his trains running. There was always something to add, to fix or to change. He stayed in the basement until Heidi called that it was time for breakfast. A couch with a pillow underneath one of the structures is still witness that sometimes Goldi even slept in his kingdom! Unfortunately, Goldi fell off a ladder a few years ago and now his back is giving him trouble. So, with a heavy heart, he started looking around for somebody who would be interested in his installation. And yes indeed, the Sacramento Railroad Museum said they would like to have it. One last time we climbed down to the basement. Except for some of his prize locomotives, all trains were gone,



Working on the rail tracks in front of various stores

the rails lay silent but most of the landscape was still there. So I took some pictures, and we climbed back up.



People at the Durango Rail Station

It's good-bye now to trains and installation – but what a time Goldi had!

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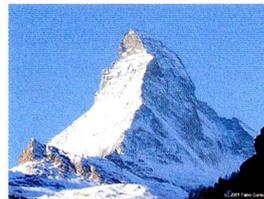
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