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REGIONAL NEWS UNITED STATES

First of August - all over the United States

North Carolina

The Swiss Club in Asheville, NC just celebrated the 1st of August at our home.

For more information, contact

CATHERINE SHOWALTER
cswshowalter@juno.com

Editorial

Dear Readers in the United States

Maybe you have noticed: We have 12 pages instead of the usual 8 pages for the Regional News. This is thanks to the additional ads. This gave me the opportunity to include all 1st of August articles I received and many pages are mostly red and white.

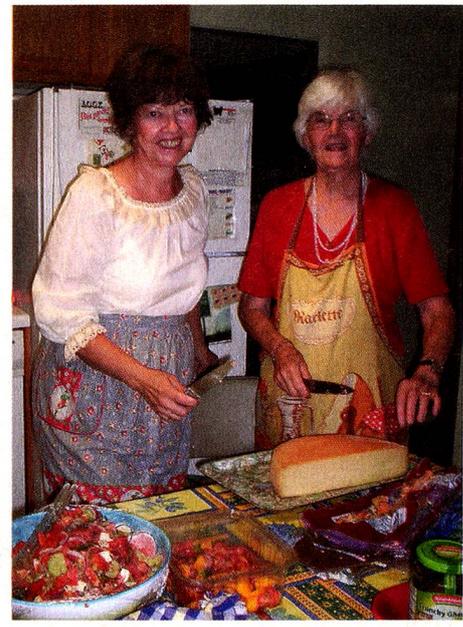
Somebody who was very proud to show her Swiss colors is Trudy Wells. Read her enthusiastic article about Mathias Frank, a Swiss cyclist who won a stage in a pro bike race in Colorado.

Many times I receive pictures with a resolution that is too low for printing. So I have to make them smaller. That was the case in the Florida article on page 7. But I thought it would still look better with small pictures than no pictures at all, especially as all are from happy smiling people!

When you read these lines, the holiday season will be just around the corner. One tip: Check out page 5 with the ad for the Swiss Singing Society Harmonie's Christmas CD. Being a Harmonie member myself, I'm obviously very objective when I confirm that it is a great CD, you will not regret buying it!!!

Deadline for the next Swiss Review with Regional Pages is January 1st, so I will jump into the New Year, working - and enjoying very much doing it!

WAL BAUR
walbaur@gmail.com



Cutting the raclette cheese are Denise Odell from the Valais on the right and Sylvia Young from Schwyz on the left.

All pictures by Catherine Showalter



The whole group in front of the Showalter's house



Getting ready for a ride

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Florida

This is the Badraun family



From left to right: Laura, Ruth, Reto and Ladina. The mother is wearing the typical Sunday dress from the Canton of Graubünden. The white linen apron is hand embroidered. The dress is fine wool material and the blouse is white linen too. All material was bought from the Heimatwerk in Chur.

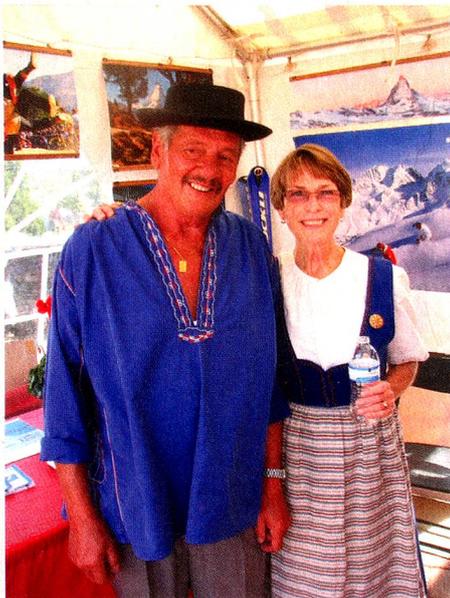
The whole family belongs to the Florida Central Swiss Club, which organizes interesting events. 160 people attended the 1st of August celebration.

RUTH BADRAUN
brfwellness@gmail.com

South Carolina

Swiss American Society of the Piedmont

Looking back, 2012 turned out to be a really great year for our club, based in Spartanburg, SC. Specifically, we were thrilled when Switzerland



Walter Baumgartner and Sharon Gallmann worked at the Tourism booth

land was asked to be the Honored Country at the International Festival. This is an event put on by the City of Spartanburg every year in October. The International Festival highlights the diversity in our city by featuring many different countries around the world represented by local residents. At the festival, each country is given a small booth space in which to create a display. The main objec-



Christel Schweizer Lavelle and Udo Skarke at the Ricola booth passed out hundreds of samples

tive is to inform visitors about each country and showcase the things that make them unique and interesting. As the honored country, we had an entire section of the festival with which to work. This provided us the opportunity (and challenge) of disseminating a lot of information about Switzerland.

To answer this challenge, many volunteers from our club dedicated themselves to putting on a great show. By the time the festival began, we had set up 7 different booths, successfully filling every inch of our allotted space with all things Swiss.

The information at each booth varied. One showcased watches and knives; another dealt with travel and tourism. There was also a booth representing Swiss sports. We were lucky enough to be able to feature a working robot, as part of our business and industry booth, graciously donated by Staubli, a Swiss company. Others booths included traditions and customs, history, and the most popular one of all - the cheese and chocolate booth, which handed out samples all day! In addition to the booths, we set up a Red Cross display and had a Heidi Haus that visitors could actually go inside of. We passed out hundreds of samples that Ricola sent, and we even sponsored a contest in which a trip worth \$6,000 was awarded to one lucky winner who answered all the trivia questions correctly. All in all, it was an overwhelmingly successful event and a great honor to be featured. Please visit our website for a schedule of our events, and we would gladly welcome your visit if you are ever in the area!

KATY HONE
Swiss American
Society of the
Piedmont
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Spartanburg
SC 29304
www.swissclubupstate.com

Pictures:
Kathy Wofford



South Dakota

Swiss Independence Day celebration and other news from the Black Hills

For several years, all of us here from Rapid City and surroundings celebrate First of August at the Coyote Blues Bed and Breakfast near Hill City, in South Dakota! Again this year we had a very pleasant evening, with good food, Bratwürste and Cervelats from the Swiss Deli in Denver, and prima fine salads and desserts brought in by Club members. Everything was wonderful! We had lots of guests from Coyote Blues with their American friends. The Innkeepers at Coyote Blues are Christine and Hanspeter Streich from Basel. They are well known far beyond the borders of South Dakota.

Yesterday, over in the little town of Hermosa, SD, there were two vans full of Swiss Tourists, going to the Pine Ridge Reservation for the POW WOW! Charly from Winterthur is the Tour Operator, and brings Swiss People all summer to this region, and of course they all enjoy it! I met the group waiting in their vans, while Charly had gone to Pops Grocery Store for Soft Ice Stengel!!!!!!

Greetings from our Alp in South Dakota, with lots of wild deer and Turkeys and lots of Bambi! My sister in Switzerland calls me Mili Weber in America, because I feed the deer, and yes I knew our Mili Weber personally from St. Moritz, but I do not paint. Mili was a great Artist. Her house has become a Museum in Dimley in St. Moritz!

MARIA CARROLL-BADRAUN, eli@mt-rushmore.net

Idaho

1st of August in Boise.

We received the invitation for the 1st of August Swiss Picnic in Boise. We had a wonderful potluck lunch in a nice quiet park in Boise. There were about 50 attending, some 2nd and 3rd generation. At the end of the picnic, we took a group picture.

URS AND MARY-FRANCE WYSS

STAR, ID 83669

urwyss@aol.com




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4 *North Carolina*
Swiss Society Of Charlotte

Once more, the Red Fez Club on Lake Wylie was the perfect location to celebrate our 1st of August National Holiday. Around 70 people enjoyed the great weather this year, the grilled sausages (St. Galler Bratwurst), Fleischkäse and all the trimmings from the salad bar, desserts and liquid refreshments for young and adults. The traditional lampion parade was held at dusk and young and old enjoyed a very peaceful sunset.



Heinz Roth, our Honoray Consul, gives a speech while Roger Boschung (President) and Thomas Huber (Vicepresident) listen attentively.

A big "Thank You" goes to all the volunteers and board members for their help in setting-up, grilling etc. and Gigi's Cup Cakes and Swiss Favorites for their support. All in all, it was another great day. For further information on upcoming events (Jass-Tournament, Annual Meeting and Santa Claus), visit our Website: www.swisscharlotte.com. We are all looking forward to seeing you at one of our activities and would like to hear from you. On behalf of the Board of the Swiss Society of Charlotte

WALTER HESS



The Boss- and Leuthardt families are ready to enjoy the lampion parade.

Nevada
1st of August

The Swiss Friends in Reno, NV had a wonderful time at the First of August celebration with good food, singing, & companionship, with about 20 people attending.

KURT STETTLER: electricsswiss@yahoo.com



Above: The 1st of August party in full swing

Below: At least once a month friends meet for some serious Jassen!



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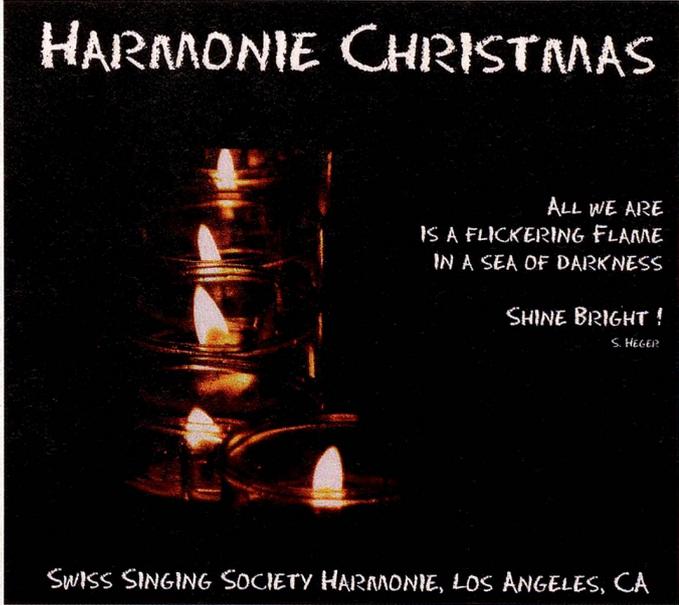
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The Swiss Singing Society Harmonie from Los Angeles is offering a new Christmas CD. It's the 2011 Christmas Concert program, beginning with Alphorns and then various Christmas songs by the Harmonie and the CDM Chancel Choirs and Children Carolers. This is your ideal stocking stuffer or Christmas present and is sure to enchant everybody. Songs are in Swiss German, German, Latin and English with Stille Nacht/Silent Night and Haendel's Hallelujah as a rousing finale.

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Mailbag

Sometimes it needs special individuals to reminiscing our long ago youth....I grew up in Wil, canton of St.Gallen and pretty much from your article (editorial in SR 3/2013), can relate to it and how very much I enjoyed it.

Yes to the Milch-Kanne and Milch-Büechli, yes to the Schlitten, yes to moms coffemill which I bought her after receiving 5 Rappen for each shopping trip for neighbors. It took me months to buy.

Yes to the milkmans horse-drawn carriage, yes to the cart pulled by one strong St.Bernard, and to recieving a chocolate from the landlord for paying the rent, and yes to moms strawberry preserve.....

Can't express just how very much I enjoyed your wonderful way of expressing your growing-up. Surely you must have recieved many compliments with similar comments. I trust all CH Review readers loved it. Hope you have more to write about.

With kindest Schwiizer Grüessli aus Florida,

ANN GESIN-EISENRING
swissmiss7@comcast.net

Note from the editor: I received only one more letter regarding Swiss Review # 3/2013. It contained grammar corrections of mistakes I made in the editorial!

Call for Heirs
Hella **Ausübel** died on January 31, 2013 in Ebikon, Canton of Lucerne, Switzerland. She was born on June 7, 1926 as daughter of Chajim Aron **Ausübel** and Rywka **Ausübel** born **Leisten**, from Lucerne. Last address: Luzernerstrasse 21, 6030 Ebikon. The authorities know not all legal heirs. Considered legal heirs are the descendants from the parents' family line. Legal heirs who want to claim part of the inheritance from Hella Ausübel, are herewith requested, as mentioned in article 555 of the Swiss Civil Law, to make themselves known to the undersigned inheritance office within one year of publication of this notice, providing proof of their right to inherit. If no claim is presented within one year, the inheritance will be divided amongst the known heirs, except in case of a legal suit. Ebikon, June 19 2013 Address: Teilungsamt Ebikon, Postfach 177, 6031 Ebikon, Switzerland

America in the early 1960s

... was a country in transition – an atmosphere of racial tension and Cold War paranoia contrasted with a vitality and optimism for the future. It was in this environment that **Derrick Widmer**, a young Swiss law student found himself in Chicago. It's a personal history of living and loving the American way.

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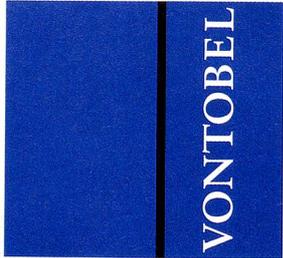
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Florida The year that was

Members and guests of the Swiss American Club of SW Florida have enjoyed many fun filled events this year, beginning with the New Year's Gala Dinner & Dance at a local country club. The evening commenced with a toast of Champagne offered by the Club, followed by a gourmet dinner. Dancing shoes were definitely needed to dance down memory lane to the sound of the "Vic Tommarchi Trio" as the band took the crowd back in time to the cool grooves and mellow tunes of the 60's and 70's.

Saturday, February 9, 2013, was all about cheese. Once again the fondue party was one of the most successful events with a record attendance of 59 people.



Brita and Heinz Rubin at the Fondue Party

The cocktail hour was a pleasant moment to familiarize and chitchat with fellow members and their guests while the "fondue chefs" prepared this great mixture of Vacherin and Gruyère cheeses with the adequate addition of garlic and Kirsch. Soon the fondue in "caquelons" was put on every table, tasting better each year. The big bang came when a guest fired up the room with traditional Swiss country-dance music. It did not take long and some tipsy friends took to the dance floor, hopping around like jumping jacks gesticulating arms and legs in various directions!



Roland Zuber & Solaya Scherrer dancing to settle the fondue

For the second time, the Annual Meeting of the Swiss American Club, Inc. took place at the Palmetto-Pine Country Club in Cape Coral, It was a pleasure to have Christoph Geel preside over the meeting, while Hermann Baud

read the treasurer's report. Various subjects were discussed, among them the election of new board members. At the close of the business meeting, Christoph took a moment to say farewell to his presidency because of health reasons and our new president paid tribute in his honor. (Christoph succumbed to his long battle with cancer in August.)



Mouth watering lunch buffet

The weather forecast for Saturday, April 6, was positive. Just as fifty-one participants, including six guests and two children, were boarding the Captain JP in Ft. Myers for a luncheon river cruise, the sun emerged. Soon everyone gathered at the tables decorated with Swiss and American flags, and lively conversations ensued. Surprising was how long it took to clear the city of Ft. Myers and get to the Lee County Civic Center, but the Captain JP's speed was only 6 miles per hour. The bar opened for cocktails and a wonderful lunch buffet was rolled in. As the boat approached the lock, almost everyone went on deck to "supervise" the activity of lifting the vessel up. The back of the lock was closed and the front was opened. As the river water slowly poured in, the boat rose up to the level of the river above and traveled on. The locks along the Caloosahatchee River are recreational areas with trailer parks and picnic tables on both sides.

Punta Gorda is a picturesque city on Florida's southwest coast whose history dates to the days of Spain's first forays into the New World. Today, the Punta Gorda Historical Mural Society commemorates the area's long and storied history with dozens of colorful murals. These murals are a charming part of the city located where the Peace River

meets Charlotte Harbor. In the meantime the golfers of the Swiss American Club had their annual golf tournament at St. Andrews South Golf Club in Punta Gorda. The 15 players enjoyed great sunshine and a nice breeze. After the round with a cool drink in their hands you could hear the usual stories and excuses. After the golf and the city tour, the participants met at the Village Fish Market Restaurant for dinner.

On a sunny Saturday, June 15, 2013, club members gathered at the beautiful beach in Wiggins Pass State Park. Two of them had staked out a wonderful spot and had already decorated the tables with red tablecloths. The way to the area was marked with red and white balloons and little



Heidi Breit & Roman Owczarczak enjoying their lunch

Swiss flags. One by one people arrived and soon the socializing began. The last two couples arrived in their kayaks! As soon as everybody was there, the grills were lit and the cooks started their work.



Walter & Ursula Heierli and Christoph & Judith Rudolf arrived in kayaks

The invitation for the July event promised happy hour, dinner, and cards at the Pewter Mug Restaurant in North Naples. During cocktails the conversation was lively, and once everybody was there, dinner was ordered and served. Before the room furniture was re-arranged for the card games, President Peter Zahner welcomed every-

body. About one dozen people stayed behind for their card games and the rest retired into the bar for a nightcap and more conversation. Everyone had a great time and promised to attend the Swiss Independence Day celebration on August 1st.



Harry Hauser & Walter Heierli cooking up a storm

At the Swiss Nation's Birthday on August 1st, 56 members and guests joined the celebration at a private club on Bonita Beach. Everyone mingled and enjoyed some white wine, sponsored by the club, and assorted hors d'oeuvres prepared by members. After singing the National Anthem, the cooks got busy cranking up the grills for the super-sized Swiss style bratwursts, which were served with fresh bread and mustard. Soon the DJ started playing Swiss music, which was enjoyed by most of the ex-patriots. The little cantonal flags waived in the breeze and the atmosphere was very happy. Having been encouraged by the president in his invitation to bring baked goods for dessert, a very impressive selection of cakes and cookies was enjoyed by all. For some time the dark sky was threatening, but the bad weather stayed away from the beach area. One member figured out that this was the seven hundred and twenty-second birthday of the Swiss Nation. And, once again, the organizers did a great job, which was appreciated by all the participants.

On September 6, members of the club enjoyed a dinner show at the Broadway Palm Theater in Ft. Myers.

Check out our website at swissamericanclub.com for up-coming events.

ROSMARIE F. STROTHER, SECRETARY
SWISS AMERICAN CLUB OF SW FLORIDA

Arizona

Firefighters visit Switzerland

Scottsdale Fire Department officials recently returned from the first International Firefighters Fest Challenge hosted by Scottsdale Sister City Interlaken, Switzerland.

The Firefighter delegates were happy to represent the City of Scottsdale and Mayor Jim Lane during this international event. The delegates were selected based on the lowest times scored on a physical ability test and those times paid off; the team came in 11th out of 44 teams and represented the organization well.

"The delegates learned about the fire services and techniques in Europe, met the wonderful people of our Sister City, and experience one of the most beautiful areas of the world, in Interlaken," said Scottsdale Fire Chief Tom Shannon.



The event sponsors were as generous as they were organized. They covered travel, food and lodging costs, and Scottsdale Firefighters enjoyed very busy days filled with firefighter interaction, equipment assessment, firefighting methodology and most importantly interacting with the community and people of Interlaken.

Attending with Fire Chief Shan-

non were Battalion Chief Chris Schibi, Firefighter Blake Miller, Firefighter Chris Hauser and Firefighter Nick Spatt of the Scottsdale Fire Department. Each of these firefighters was selected based on their commitment to wellness and fitness as well as ambassadorship of Scottsdale.

During the Firefighters Fest, firefighting teams from Switzer-

land, Germany, and the United States, Russia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Germany and Italy competed in the Rescue and Extinguishing Challenges. "This was a fantastic experience. The skills and knowledge gained from observing and discussing techniques and strategies with Firefighters from around the world were invaluable," Shannon said.

The Scottsdale firefighters were taken in by the beauty of Interlaken. Chief Shannon said he felt very warmly welcomed. We are forever thankful for this experience. We met the most wonderful people in Interlaken. It is a picturesque location in the world filled with beautiful and gracious people. Scottsdale looks forward to hosting representatives of Interlaken in the future.

TOM SHANNON

TShannon@ScottsdaleAZ.gov

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The motel has 12 guest rooms on 2 floors, all with balconies overlooking the river, AC, private baths and small refrigerators. There is a game room with pool table, table tennis and dart board in the basement.

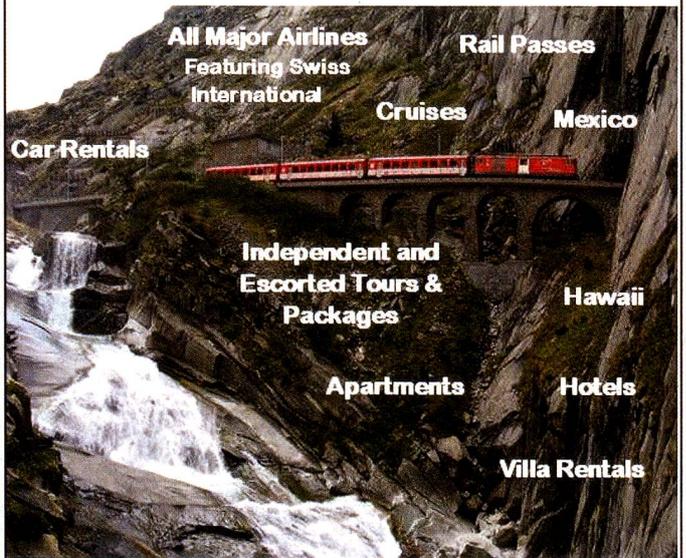
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Colorado

Swiss Mathias Frank wins stage in bike race

The USA Pro Challenge came to Steamboat CO - the excitement in town and everywhere was huge.

Dressed in Switzerland's colors - the country of the red and white - we waited for the Racers to sign in on Gondola Square before they left for Beaver Creek, stage four.

Well, myself, I mosly waited for Mathias Frank who won the 2nd stage in Beckenridge CO the day before. Mathias made the front page here in the local newspaper, "The Steamboat Today." All I could think was: "Has Mathias seen that? Does Mathias know?" I was going to make



Trudy Wells-Meyer in Front of the BMC Team cars



Mathias, you are on the front page of the sports section in the newspaper "Steamboat Today!"



Mathias Frank is interviewed at the start

sure he would!

When he walked towards where we were standing, right up front on the way to the podium, I held up the paper to his face - his huge picture and amazing headline - one to remember. In my native Swiss German I said: "You want me to send this to your Mother"? His smile was priceless and his hesitation showed: this was his first glimpse at that particular picture.

"Mathias the Winner in Beckenridge CO"

He grabbed the paper - it made my day - I had brought it for him!!! I am not a cycling fan; however, as a Swiss to root for a Swiss in America, in Steamboat CO, truly is as good as it gets!

Hopp Schwyz!

TRUDY WELLS MEYER [SWISS BORN]
trudy.Wells8@sbcglobal.net

PS. Mathias Frank finished the race in 2nd place overall and the BMC team won the team competition.



Matthias is looking for his team manager who had just walked by, for him to take the newspaper and put it in his back-pack.



Trudy and Lew Wells-Meyer in full Swiss Colors. Lew is the one who took all the other pictures.

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Swiss solar plane visits the Valley of the Sun

Solar Impulse's visit to the Valley of the Sun, Phoenix, Arizona's Sky Harbor can easily be called to be the most significant event of our small country having a very big impact in our mutual history. Piloted by Bertrand Piccard and met by co-initiator Andre Borschberg, SI made history landing at its first stop at a commercial airport in North America at 12:30am on Saturday, May 4th. The pilots displayed their CLEAN GENERATION flag – presented later to Arizona's Governor - and marked the completion of the first leg in the journey across America.



Bertrand Piccard, Alisa Jost (Honorary Consul of Switzerland), Jan Brewer (Governor of Arizona) and André Borschberg holding the Clean Generation flag

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Witnessed by the press, the superb SI team and the very enthusiastic children of the local Swiss representative, the plane approached slowly, almost hovering, and was brilliantly lit by 16 lamps (only



Delmar Boni a native American Indian healer blessed Solar Impulse's pilots before departure to Dallas-Forth Worth

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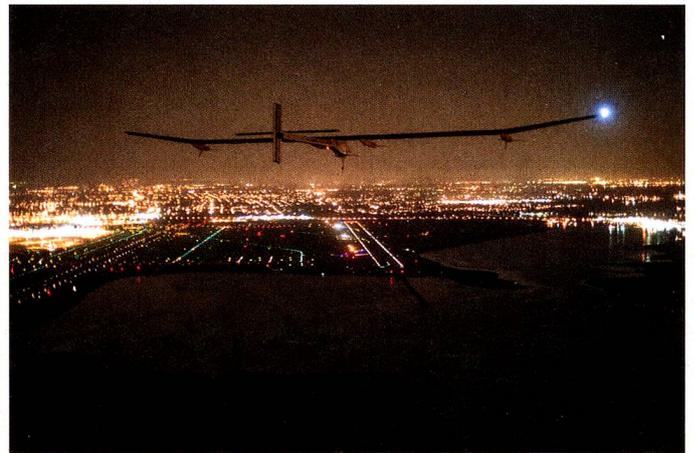
150W) prompting the locals to begin calling the airport and emergency services to report a UFO! But as the City of Phoenix said, it was not a UFO but an Identified Solar Airplane. The extraordinary landing was followed by a very special welcome by Gov. Jan Brewer who promised that Arizona 'would do anything to support' SI's mission and graciously accepted the flag from Andre & Bertrand. The dinner under the wings of SI was also attended by Secretary of State Ken Bennett, State Treasurer Doug Ducey, Ambassador Barbara Barrett, Craig Barrett, Consul General Victor Trevino Escudero of Mexico among other local consuls and a wonderful contingent of the local Swiss community, first and foremost Max & Elsbeth Haechler, the former having served



4th leg: Lambert St. Louis to Washington Dulles via Cincinnati Lunken. Solar Impulse pilot André Borschberg climbing up into the cockpit just before taking off

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as Honorary Consul of Switzerland for almost 30 years. Solar Impulse hosted two public days where more than 150 people per hour passed through visiting the plane – both days were completely filled within hours of being open for registration. Importantly many State Legislators and Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton visited the plane and visited with both pilots gaining an understanding that the plane is not about commercial aviation but focused on instigating and inspiring the use of clean energy and hopefully a Clean Generation of



Final leg Washington D.C to New-York. Solar Impulse approaching the runway at JFK.

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young – and young at heart – to change the way we think by showing us that anything is possible. Borschberg & Piccard spoke to the graduating class of the Ira A. Fulton School of Engineering at Arizona State University and pursued this same line of thought: go beyond what you learned at school, be pioneers and innovators, challenge and change the way things are done to change the world.

To our delight and with a tear, we bid SI adieu on May 22nd, at 4:47am after an Apache Medicine man blessed the flight, Bertrand Piccard and Andre Borschberg piloted the plane into the Arizona sunrise, starting the second leg of this journey, en route to Dallas, Texas – which resulted in a new world record for distance!

The flight is long over; the plane ended its journey in New York. We should all be proud of this idea born in Switzerland.

ALISA JOST
HONORARY CONSUL OF SWITZERLAND, PHOENIX, ARIZONA
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California

Ambient Duo Aurah Creates Musical Vacation on New EP

Multi-talented Swiss Group Explores Dreamy Soundscapes on Fifth Studio Record

Switzerland's best-kept secret, organica band Aurah, is releasing another mini-vacation in the form of their newest package, *Summon the Sky EP*. The record is a fluid mixture of stylistic vocals and dreamy soundscapes filled with relaxing and soothing textures. The multi-talented pair, multi-instrumentalist Judith Martin and Billboard chart-topping producer Marc Dold, have both shared significant success individually and as a group including nabbing copious movie scores. As they continue to gain exposure, Aurah consistently offers up ambient bliss.

While exploring the local music scene in their hometown, Marc and Judith were just wide-eyed teens when they met. Years later, both artists migrated to Boston to further their educational journey at Berklee College of Music. After establishing their roots in the U.S., Aurah composed the original film score for independent movies "Loving Annabelle" and "Sunset Junction." Their repertoire expanded showcasing tracks included in the blockbusters "Blood Diamond" and the Academy Award winner, "Little Miss Sunshine," among countless other films and hit television shows. As one half



Organica band Aurah consists of multi-instrumentalist Judith Martin and Billboard chart-topping producer Marc Dold

of the popular production duo Swiss American Federation, Marc Dold has scored two Billboard #1's and worked with music front runners such as Paul Van Dyk, Nelly Furtado and Basement Jaxx, to name a few. Adding their special touch, Aurah opens the *Summon the Sky EP* with an alchemic departure to Bob Marley's original song "3 Little Birds." Infusing modern electronica and subtle elements of reggae, Judith and Marc compliment each other's voices behind textural guitars. "Take My Breath Away" follows with a compelling lyrical foundation, poetically conveying every emotion. Cradled by astral synths, Judith's sultry and airy vocals shine as she laments about being heart-broken and finally opening up to love. The EP's title track, "Summon the Sky" submerges listeners into a sonic stress-free zone. Transitioning from a soft, deep space sound, track 4, "Shine On," livens the mood with an upbeat groove.

Translated from the Tibetan language to mean the circle of life, "Khorwa" is Aurah's fifth track on the EP and is infused with cultural drums and tribal chants. The EP's closing song "Pleasant Placidness" is a four-minute journey to mental freeness, just as the song's title implies. Complete with a minimalist line-up of instruments, the song fully engages with a

gentle, yet melodic strum of guitar chords and ethereal synths, while intervals of delicate vocals fill in the pockets.

Summon the Sky EP was produced by both Judith Martin and Marc Dold with additional acoustic drums by Blair Shotts. "It's been an adventurous time and we're back with music that excites us. We aim to take our listeners on a sonic ride exploring contrasts. Whether nature versus city life, falling in and out of love or just taking time out and staring at the sky, we hope the music will be a soundtrack to our listeners' own imagination," the duo said. The collection of tracks on Aurah's newest release *Summon the Sky* invite listeners on an odyssey through soundscapes that illuminate the imagination. Keep up with Aurah at www.Aurah.com

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New Mexico

Albert Noyer

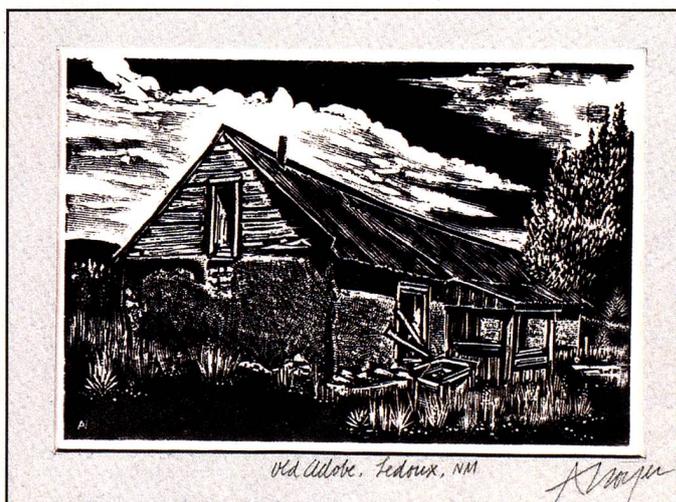
Swiss Review has published book reviews of several of Albert Noyer's novels. But there is a new side to him. This is what he wrote about himself:

"I do write novels but am primarily an artist working in watercolor and printmaking media. The picture shown below won first place in the 2013 Miniatures Exhibit in Albuquerque.

My main technique is a wood cut, but this linoleum is of an abandoned home at Ledoux, a village in Northern New Mexico".

Albert Noyer has just finished his latest book "Alberix the Celt". It will be published next year.

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California Charles Shaw, the cheap Californian

Ask any Swiss living in California, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut or New Jersey about their favorite grocery store, and you will most likely get the answer: Trader Joe's. The storefront is painted gaily. Before you enter the store, cut flowers and orchids galore greet you and inside, to your right more flowers, veggies and fruit. Sometimes you find Mache (Nüsssliat) or rhubarbs. In the corner a little tasting station



with daily specialties and coffee to sample. At the cheese section, every Swiss' heart starts beating faster. There is not only Emmentaler and Gruyère, but sometimes also Appenzeller, all the Brie, Camembert and Gorgonzola you can think of and lots of other cheeses too. In winter they have Fondue mix and Raclette cheese already sliced. You could just follow your nose to find the daily fresh baked bread -- from crusty baguettes to whole grain!



All the way in the back is the spirits section with wine, beer and liquors from around the world. Every trip to Trader Joe's stops there. And that's where the title for this story comes in. Trader Joe's famous "Two Buck Chuck" labeled Charles Shaw is prominently displayed. Until about a year back each bottle, be it Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, Shiraz, Merlot or Cabernet Sauvignon cost \$ 1.99. Now its \$ 2.49 per bottle. How can Trader Joe's sell wine for that price, especially as some of these wines have won prizes at blind wine tasting events? And it's not just a short time offer. For years now, clients have carried out cartons and cartons of the cheepo!

Having grown up in the Valais, I know perfectly well what vineyards are meant to look like: stony dry soil, on the south side of the mountains. The vines are tended to on foot and by hand. The typical picture of the harvesting season is men and women with large baskets on their back,



climbing up and down the hill and emptying the grapes into small carts. I'm pretty sure that's not how it's done here! Some time ago an article in the Los Angeles Times shed light into this business. It was an interview with Fred Franzia whose family has been producing wine in California for the last 115 years and who owns the Charles Shaw wineries. They control about 30,000 acres of vineyards. The vines are planted so far apart that tractors can pass between the rows, sometimes for more than three miles before they have to turn around. Fred Franzia said that he even saved on tires if the tractors don't have to make so many turns. According to Franzia, the grape harvest is the most beautiful time when

20 to 30 harvest machines drive through the vineyards at night (yes, grapes are only picked at night) filling up to 120 trucks with 3 million pounds of grapes. Everything is timed so perfectly like an orchestra.

Most of these vineyards are in Northern California. Until several years ago, that was also apple orchard country. But a crisis overcame the Gravenstein-er-land. Prices fell so sharply that it was not even worth to pick the apples. So many farmers switched to planting vines, which, a few years later, resulted in too many grapes. All that overproduction ends up in Fred Franzia's wineries for a very low price. That would all be fine and dandy but what irks the wine producers from the most thought after and most expensive Napa and Sonoma valleys, is, that Fred Franzia's wineries



are also there. If you check out the back label of the Charles Shaw wines, you can read there: "Cellared and bottled by Charles Shaw wineries, Napa and Sonoma!" The shoppers don't mind and keep on buying the Two Buck Chuck. The only thing is: you would never dare serving it to friends, because all of them know: "it's the cheap Californian!"

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