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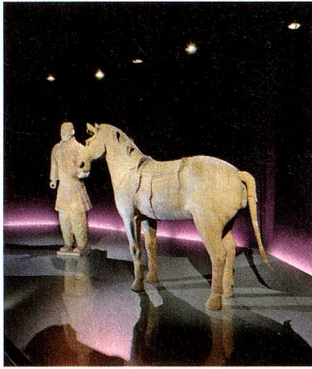
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Little gems



Chinese warriors in Berne

Something unusual is going on at the Historical Museum of Berne. The turreted façade of the traditional building on Helvetiaplatz is concealed by a specially erected entrance pavilion. No effort has been spared to create a fitting reception for the “eighth wonder of the world” in the Swiss capital. At the special exhibition entitled “Qin – The Eternal Emperor and his Terracotta Warriors”, visitors can see ten of the 8,000 or so original life-size figures and other objects from China. The Terracotta Army is one of the world’s most spectacular archaeological discoveries. The warriors come from a huge burial site dating from the time

of Qin (259–210 BC), first discovered in 1974. Visitors can explore the exhibition with the help of explanatory texts, films, audio guides and an extensive catalogue, which bring to life a crucial period in Chinese history. Emperor Qin is a somewhat controversial figure. The first emperor of a unified China, he had no qualms about imposing his policies, started the building of the Great Wall, and standardised coins, weights and measures as well as the Chinese script. JM

The exhibition can be seen at the Historical Museum of Berne until 17 November. Opening times: Tue–Sun 9am–6pm. www.qin.ch



From conservative to cool

Everyone knows braces are useful and practical. But did you know they can also be cool, casual and even elegant? They can be worn by anyone from toddlers to grandfathers, and they have become a popular accessory among trendsetters. Just under four years ago, clothing designer Anna de Weerdt and former electrician Markus Elmiger, both from Lucerne, turned their love of braces into a business. They called their label “Treger”. All their braces are hand-crafted. They are available in a range of widths, in elastic or fabric, and with different patterns, from discreet to

eye-catching. The braces are secured to the trousers with clips or fine nappa leather tabs and, of course, Swiss materials are used wherever possible. All models can be ordered online, and de Weerdt und Elmiger also accept custom orders. Standard “Tregers” are priced at between CHF 59 for children’s models and CHF 89 for exclusive adult models. BE

www.treger.ch

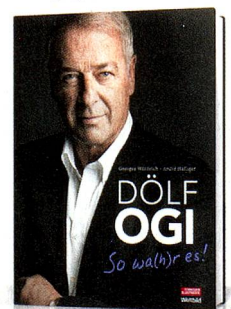


Telling it like it is:

the phenomenon of Dölf Ogi

He may have left the national government more than 12 years ago, but Adolf Ogi remains as popular and omnipresent as ever. And if you read “So wa(h)r es”, the biography of the former Federal Councillor published to coincide with his 70th birthday, you will easily understand why. Ogi’s lasting appeal has nothing to do with PR and everything to do with the authenticity of this exceptional politician. The story is told in a fascinating way, peppered with anecdotes and scenes from his life, as well as a few previously unknown facts. The authors succeed in showing how Ogi “works”. How he overcame tough situations with unconventional methods, for example, not just in the Federal Council but also in his encounters with major international figures. A whole chapter is dedicated to the close relationship between Dölf Ogi and Ruth Dreifuss, also a member of the Federal Council but with the Social Democratic Party rather than Ogi’s Swiss People’s Party. The selection of photos, in the style of the “Schweizer Illustrierte” magazine, will please those who like pictures. They are all well-known faces, from Bill Clinton to Vreni Schneider, and all are with Dölf Ogi. JM

Georges Wüthrich, André Häfliger: “Dölf Ogi. So wa(h)r es” (in German). Ringier AG (“Schweizer Illustrierte”) and Weltbild Verlag; 2012; 176 pages; CHF 39.90 (incl. DVD)
In French: “Dölf Ogi, c’est formidable!”, Editions Attinger, Hauterive; 2013; 180 pages; CHF 42



Bulletins

National Council opposes closure of representations abroad

Plans by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) to close the Swiss embassy in Guatemala and the consulate general in Chicago were met with opposition in Parliament. At the end of April, the National Council, by a large majority, called upon the Federal Council to abandon plans to close the two representations. The vote was triggered by proposals presented by the Council's Foreign Affairs Committee and National Councillor Roland Büchel (SVP). He is also a member of the Council of the Swiss Abroad.

Fewer asylum applications

Asylum applications fell by 19.6 % year-on-year to 5,759 in the first three months of 2013. Compared with the final quarter of 2012, the reduction amounted to 9.6 %. These figures were provided by the Federal Statistical Office. The Federal Office for Migration has indicated that the fall in applications is due to various measures introduced by federal government to avoid clearly unfounded and multiple applications. 3,508 people whose asylum applications were rejected left Switzerland in the first quarter of 2013.

Energy efficiency initiative

The signatures for the so-called energy efficiency initiative were submitted in mid-May. This popular initiative demands that power consumption in 2035 must not exceed 2011 levels. Federal government and the cantons would be obliged to implement measures to attain this target. The proposal's initiators say that the collection of the signatures required (100,000) was easily achieved.

Construction boom in prospect

Significantly more planning applications were submitted and ap-

proved in Switzerland last year than in the previous year. Consent was granted to 71% more planning applications in the last three months of 2012 than in the same quarter of 2011. The construction of 22,260 homes in total was approved between October and December. According to the Federal Statistical Office, 75,600 homes were under construction at the end of December.

Less wine being drunk

276 million litres of wine were consumed in Switzerland in 2012. That is 6.6 million litres or 2.2% less than in 2011. Consumption of domestic wine fell by as much as 3.5%. The market share of Swiss wine stands at 36.3%, with that of white wine twice as high as that of red. Wine production in 2012 was over 10% below output in 2011 due to less than ideal weather conditions.

Research into causes of death

62,649 people died in Switzerland in 2010, according to the Federal Statistical Office. Several illnesses were the cause of death in over 80% of cases. The most common cause of death in people aged over 80 is cardiovascular disease, whereas in those below the age of 80 it is cancer.

Population continues to grow

8,036,900 people were living in Switzerland at the end of 2012. That is 82,300 or 1% more than in the previous year. The birth surplus of 17,500 and the increase in immigrant numbers by 64,800 contributed to the rise in the resident population. The number of foreign nationals stood at 1,869,000 at the end of 2012, which was 53,000 more than at the end of 2011. The gender distribution is 4.1 million women and 4 million men.

Quotes

"Such arrogance! Once an idiot, always an idiot."

Philippe Müller, President of the Swiss FDP, about a manager he does not wish to name

"Conceive complex ideas, but express them simply, not the other way round."

Franz Josef Strauss (1915–1988), German CSU politician

"A few black sheep are usually enough to tarnish the image of all those who conduct themselves properly."

Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann on World Consumer Rights Day

"The destiny of the nation depends on its nutrition."

Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

"The issue of international law versus the rights of the people will be on the agenda."

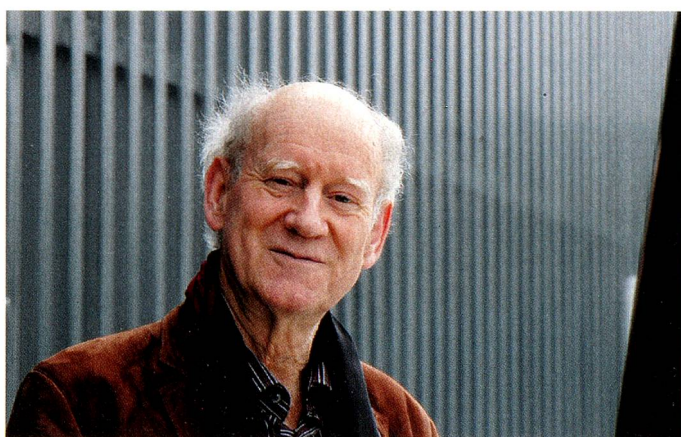
Toni Brunner, SVP President, on his party's plans for the coming months

"Security is not achieved by erecting fences but rather by opening doors."

Urho Kaleva Kekkonen (1900–1986), Finish politician and President of State 1956–1982

"Common sense can make up for almost any level of education, but no level of education can make up for common sense."

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), German philosopher



Few Swiss could fail to recognise Franz Hohler since everyone has come across him at some point in their lives. Generations of children have seen him on television playing the cello and telling stories, the politically minded have hailed him at anti-nuclear demonstrations, and those of more mature years enjoy listening to his walking tales. Now aged 70, on 12 May he was presented with the 2013 Literature Prize at Solothurn's Literary Days. The jury said: "With his off-the-wall humour and passionate commitment he has always stood up for the invisible, the weak and the child." Franz Hohler's work has been translated into many non-Swiss languages: in Hindi, for example, his story "The Cake" is called "Dhokha"; in Korean his "If I had a Wish" is "Nae suouan eun", and in Arabic "Jungle Desk" is "Roula le edrel". His subtle, philosophical brand of humour is world-famous. He writes of himself and other humorists: "People say that humorists are either deadly ill or deadly serious, but actually I'm quite cheerful sometimes."