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Little gems

Import and export in the Stone Age

In archaeology everything proceeds at a slightly less hectic pace than in normal life. In 1920, archaeologists discovered an ancient axe blade during a dig at Horw in the canton of Lucerne. However, news of this sensational find has only emerged now almost 100 years later. Researchers have proven that the axe blade dates to the period around 4000 BC. This means that the Horw copper axe is Switzerland's oldest metal find.

What is remarkable about the discovery is not just its age but also the fact that the axe was not produced in Switzerland. It was imported. It is



extremely likely that the copper comes from a mine in the Austria/Slovenia region. Archaeologists say that similar axe blades have also been found in eastern and northern Europe. Archaeologists also know that Switzerland did not have the expertise in metallurgy required for such production at that time. It was not until 3800 BC that Neolithic man in the region that is modern-day Switzerland

learned to make copper items for himself. At any rate, this provides clear evidence that our ancestors very early on developed a flair for import and export. (mul)



Murder with Swiss precision

Death is dreadful and murder horrifying except when it is a purely literary exploration of the human psyche. Even murder can then become enjoyable reading. In any case, in just under 300 pages a new title "Mord in Switzerland" (Murder in Switzerland) takes us into a dark world where murder is carried out with Swiss precision. It contains literary gems from 18 well-known Swiss authors.



The gruesome tales are written by Karin Bachmann in Biel, Anne Cuneo in Lausanne, Mitra Devi in Lucerne, Petra Ivanov in Kreuzlingen, Sam Jaun in the Jura, Milena Moser in Aarau, Peter Zeindler on Zurich's Gold Coast and Emil Zopfi in Glarus. The Swiss settings give the writing a touch of local colour. But that is actually incidental. The real discovery is the multifaceted picture that emerges when 18

authors conceive how evil manifests itself in a Swiss way. A bloodbath ensues. (mul)

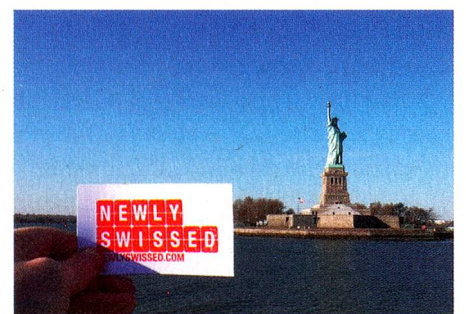
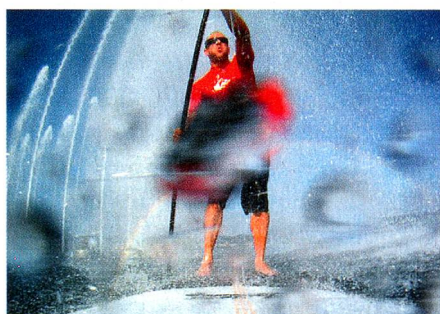
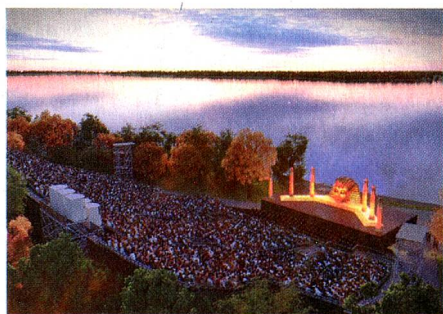
"Mord in Switzerland", Petra Ivanov/Mitra Devi (Hrsg.), Appenzeller Verlag, ISBN 3-85882-653-7. Only available in German. CHF 28, EUR 24.30

Swissmakers online

A man returns to Switzerland after several years abroad. He suddenly feels like an immigrant or tourist in his new former homeland. He sees things that he previously never noticed or paid attention to. He is curious and constantly amazed. It was in these circumstances that the idea emerged for an English-language online magazine to share discoveries and experiences with those who have recently arrived in Switzerland but also with the Swiss abroad. The magazine entitled "Newly Swissed" is packed with fascinating facts and news items about the offbeat and unfamiliar. For exam-

ple, it contains articles on the film "Der Imker", the story of a Kurdish refugee in Switzerland, on stand-up paddle-surfing, a new trend in sport, on an opera performance in Pfäffikon and on how Switzerland is well on the way to becoming a Fort Knox for data storage. The articles all in English are well written and presented. The only downside is that readers could become so engrossed in what the magazine has to offer that they might spend too much time reading and exploring. (BE)

www.newlyswissed.com



Bulletins

Motion against tax agreement with France

The National Council has approved a motion seeking to prohibit third countries from levying taxes on property in Switzerland by 119 votes to 62, against the will of the Federal Council. The motion is directly aimed at France, which is calling for a new inheritance tax agreement with Switzerland. According to the agreement text, which has already been signed by Paris and Berne, inheritance is to be taxed in the country in which the heir lives and not – as was previously the case – in the country where the testator lived.

Swiss wine at Swiss embassies

Switzerland's representations abroad are to serve only Swiss wine at official events with immediate effect. The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) has announced that a new concept regarding the consumption of wine entered into force on 1 June. The wine will now be purchased centrally by the FDFA, and embassy and consulate staff can order it directly from the warehouse for representation events. The FDFA has indicated that "a wide range of wines" is available.

Help with Council of the Swiss Abroad elections

The addresses of Swiss citizens residing abroad held by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) may be used for the election of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) in future. The National Council approved a mo-

tion on this matter during the summer session. Carlo Sommaruga, SP National Councillor and member of the CSA, initiated the motion in the Foreign Affairs Committee. The decision of the Council of States is still pending.

Lots more foreigners

There were 73,000 more foreign immigrants to Switzerland than emigrants in 2012 in net terms. Just under three quarters of them were EU/EFTA citizens. Immigration from EU states has increased significantly since the introduction of the free movement of persons accord on 1 June 2002. Net migration has since averaged 63,300 persons a year. In the period from 1991 to 2001, the migration balance in Switzerland stood at 26,400 persons a year. At that time, immigrants came almost exclusively from countries outside the EU area.

Special party conference on education

Toni Brunner, the SVP party president, says that schools in Switzerland do not meet his expectations or those of the Swiss People's Party (SVP). He told a special party conference on education in mid June that the emphasis today was placed on "wellness pedagogics" instead of achievement and discipline. The list of demands, which was adopted, includes having full-time not part-time class teachers, not starting foreign language lessons until secondary school and ridding elementary schools of "therapisation" by remedial teachers, psychologists and social workers.

Quotes

"I feel good (...) it feels good (...) I feel good."

Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann on Switzerland's free trade agreement with China, which has caused great concern, particularly among Swiss farmers

"Business must not just perceive society as an appendage."

Federal Councillor Alain Berset at a conference held by the Swiss mechanical and electrical engineering industries (Swissmem)

"Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens we have to keep going back and beginning all over again."

André Gide (1869–1951), French author and philosopher

"Before the crisis, banking confidentiality was sacrosanct and the automatic exchange of information the devil incarnate. Today, banking confidentiality is the work of the devil while the automatic exchange of information is the panacea."

Ruedi Noser, FDP National Councillor during Parliament's extraordinary session on tax compliance in Switzerland's financial centre

"I constantly wonder how a person of her stature – small body, large head – manages that."

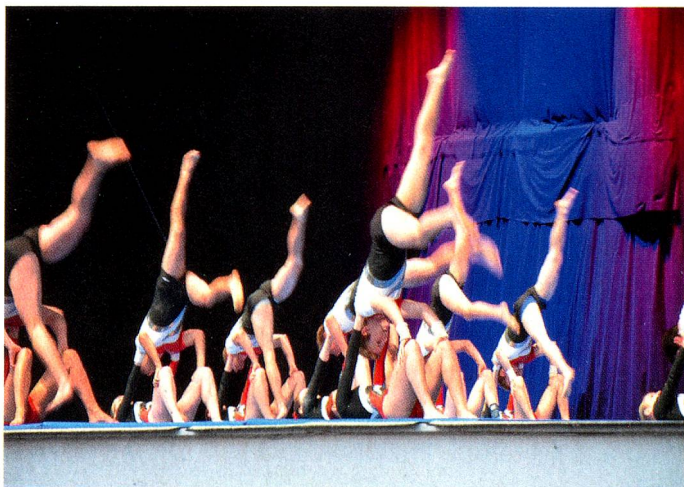
SP Council of States member Hans Stöckli on Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf and her marathon of meetings negotiating "Lex USA"

"There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest."

Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951), Austrian-British philosopher

"A story has been thought through to the end when it has taken the worst possible turn."

Friedrich Dürrenmatt (1921–1990), Swiss author



Under the slogan "Gymnastique fantastique", the Federal Gymnastics Festival took place in Biel and Magglingen from 13 to 23 June with 60,000 gymnasts, 17,000 of them young people, attending. STV Wettingen won the team competition, as it did at the 2007 Gymnastics Festival. In the artistic gymnastics contest, Giulia Steingruber won the women's event and Claudio Capelli from BTV Bern triumphed in the men's competition. They will each bear the title "Gymnastics Festival Winner" until the next competition in Aarau in 2019. Storms swept through the festival site twice and over 80 people were injured on 21 June.