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# REGIONAL NEWS

## UNITED STATES

### Editorial

Dear Readers in the United States

You should be a little more considerate with me: One week before deadline, I had not a single article from you! And I'm sure you don't want to receive Regional Pages filled just with ads. So I sent out a "help" e-mail to all Swiss representations in the United States. And they came through. You will be able to read two articles from New York, one from Los Angeles and one from Texas. At the same time I received a book for a review. Then my husband was reading "Swiss Watching – Inside the Land of Milk and Money". Friends who had lent the book to us thought it was very funny and my husband kept on chuckling while reading, although he felt that when writing about famous Swiss, Pestalozzi, Gottfried Keller and Jeremias Gotthelf should have been included. Sud-

denly he said: "You should publish a book review!" And indeed I think you would enjoy reading this book, especially when you haven't been in Switzerland for a few years. Probably even your American friends would enjoy it. Some of the misconceptions about Switzerland would be corrected, and some of what people think we are, would be reaffirmed. Definitely something to enjoy!

And don't forget, deadline for Swiss Review # 3 is April 20th.

WAL BAUR

wbaur@roadrunner.com



### North Carolina

#### Swiss Society of Charlotte

For anyone who loves cheese, wine, a nice chat with friends, and a bit of "Swissness", our annual "Raclette" evening was the right event to attend!

After the cold weather this week, we enjoyed a wonderful Saturday evening mingling with more than 100 Swiss and Swiss friends and relished the smell and taste of delicious cheese. Our guests ate more than 40 pounds of Raclette cheese during the social get-together and delighted in some Lindt chocolate and delicious desserts. In addition to the wonderful dinner the raffle, organized by Lorena Riedener, also turned out to be one of the highlights of the evening. The lucky winners took home Swiss Schnaps, excellent wine and even a Swiss Raclette set. Many thanks to Lorena!

With warm cheese in the belly, a last glass of wine and love in our hearts, we let the evening come to an end in pleasant company. Thank you to our Raclette Grill Masters Roger Boschung, Thomas Koch, Markus Bersinger, Reto Corbetti, Walter Hess, Titus Riedener and to the bar man Marco Deillon.

Don't miss our next event! Visit our homepage: [www.swisscharlotte.com](http://www.swisscharlotte.com). We hope to see you soon.

RAHEL KOLLER  
BOARD MEMBER  
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Gisela Clark looks forward to the first portion of Raclette, prepared by Raclette Grill Master Roger Boschung

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## New York

### Close partners Switzerland and US ring the bell at Wall Street



The New York Stock exchange proudly displays the American and Swiss flags

The main program of the American Swiss Foundation is a Young Leaders Conference, held annually in Switzerland since 1990. Ambassador Schaller is an alumnus of the Young Leaders (1997).

The program is an excellent platform to strengthen ties between our two countries through creating personal friendships and we are happy to celebrate this anniversary.

CONSULATE GENERAL OF SWITZERLAND IN NEW YORK  
nyc.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

On February 11, 2015 Ambassador André Schaller, Consul General of Switzerland in New York rang the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange to celebrate 70 years of the American-Swiss Foundation! The American Swiss Foundation is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1945 to preserve and strengthen the historic friendship between the United States and Switzerland.



American Swiss Foundation rings the opening bell of the NYSE

## Economic Outlook 2015

Again this year, we had the pleasure of hosting Andreas Höfert, Chief Economist and the Global Head of Wealth Management Research at UBS at the Swiss Consul General's Residence in New York. In this annual event co-organized with the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce, attendees have the chance to hear from one of the world's leading economic forecasters and to engage in a lively discussion and Q&A.

Mr. Höfert spoke about the 2015 Economic Outlook and opened his presentation by highlighting the great



Andreas Höfert, Chief Economist and the Global Head of Wealth Management Research at UBS speaks at the Swiss Residence in New York

divergence between regions, focusing on the US, EU, Switzerland and the emerging markets. By looking at the current climate, he states that "the economy is all over the place." Mr. Höfert also discussed trends in business cycles, monetary policies, how countries are coping with the strong US dollar, and reforms.

The wealth of knowledge and experience that Mr. Höfert brings makes him a dynamic speaker and expert forecaster. A graduate of St. Gallen, he earned his doctorate majoring in international macroeconomics and econometrics. He began his career at UBS and has become one of the leading economic researchers. It was clear that the audience thoroughly enjoyed his presentation and many had questions on his predictions for 2015. We hope to see him present a yearly Economic Outlook again at the Residence next year. Thanks to our partners, the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce, for co-organizing such a successful event.

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**Join me in 2015 on a great Sea Voyage**  
in the Mediterranean: It is not YACHTING!  
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call at Kotor, only Fjord in the Med, call on Albania at Sarande, **Butrint**, larger than legendary Ephesus! To **Corfu**, Paxoi (the Ionian Island), Kefalonia, lovely **Taormina** in Sicily, Lippari, Stromboli Volcano, then **Amalfi**, **Capri** & **Sorrento**. The cruise ends in **Civitavecchia**, **Aug. 22**. \$200 Spa amenity is part of our group rate of \$5,849 pp/share or higher, depending on your cabin. **BOOK EARLY** – we are holding group space, it can be revoked, if demand is high.

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## Book Review Barbarian Spring

By Jonas Lüscher, translated by Peter Lewis

From the late-2000's housing collapse in the United States to the recent economic unrest in Europe and beyond, money has seemingly caused more global panic than pleasure in the last few years. Now, Jonas Lüscher deftly reveals how tenuous our situation really is in his debut novel.

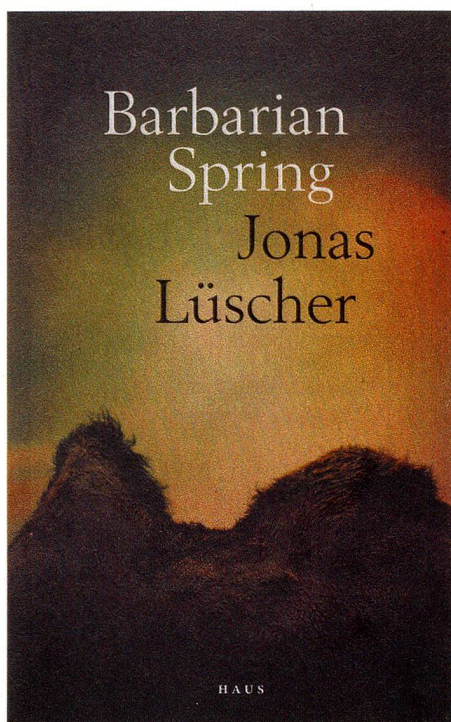
Preising is a man wealthy beyond measure – but without a shred of control over what matters most. The public face of a telecommunications company, he even has his vacations planned for him by a brilliant, yet commercially unappealing, younger colleague, the secret boss who sends Preising away when important decisions need to be made. On a trip to Tunisia, Preising is invited to the wedding of two traders from London. At the desert celebration, things take a surprising and ultimately gruesome turn after the British financial system collapses overnight – taking the wedding guests' high-paying jobs and net worth with it.

Hilariously biting in its treatment of modern materialism and an international financial system built on twisted incentives, *Barbarian Spring* offers a wickedly funny imagining of just what might be in store for the world if we can't get our priorities straight.

Jonas Lüscher was born in 1976 in Switzerland, and grew up in Berne. In 2013 he received the Berner Literature Award and the Bavarian Art Prize.

The book is published by Haus Publishing, distributed by University of Chicago Press, and available at Amazon.com.

[WWW.PRESS.UCHICAGO.EDU](http://WWW.PRESS.UCHICAGO.EDU)



## Swiss Watching - Inside the Land of Milk and Money

By Diccon Bewes

One country, four languages, 26 cantons and 7.8 million people (but only 78 % of them Swiss): there's nowhere else like it. Switzerland may be almost 400 km (about 250 miles) from the nearest drop of sea water, but it is an island at the center of Europe. Welcome to the landlocked island!

Swiss watching is a fascinating journey around Europe's most individual and misunderstood country. From seeking Heidi and finding the best chocolate to reliving a bloody past and exploring an uncertain future, Diccon Bewes proves that there's more to Switzerland than banks and skis, francs and cheese. This book dispels the myths and unravels the true meaning of "Swissness."

In a land of cultural contradictions, this is a picture of the real and normally unseen Switzerland, a place where the breathtaking scenery shaped a nation, not just a tour itinerary, and where tradition is as important as innovation.

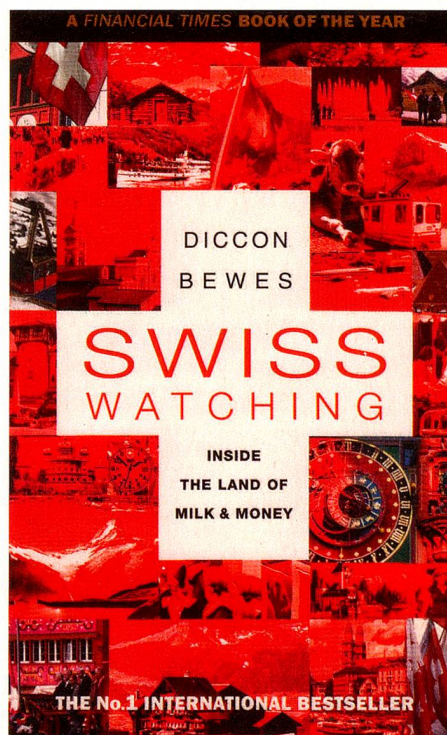
It's also the story of its people, who have more power than their politicians, but can't speak to one another in the same language – and who own more guns per head than the people of Iraq. As for those national clichés, well, not all the cheese has holes, cuckoo clocks aren't Swiss and the trains

don't always run exactly on time, but Switzerland gave us the Toilet Duck, Velcro and LSD.

Diccon Bewes is a full-time writer following the international success of "Swiss Watching". After ten years at Lonely Planet and "Holiday Which?" magazine, he decamped to Switzerland, where until recently he was manager of the Stauffacher English Bookshop in Berne.

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## Texas

## Demise of the Mayan Civilization

Last week Swiss Prof. André W. Droxler of Rice University in Houston gave an interesting talk on his findings entitled "Successive Droughts and Floods led to the Demise of the Mayan Civilization". His research is mostly on the marine geological studies at the Blue Hole in Belize. He as well touched on some of the history of the Mayans and on today's climate change and shortage of water especially in South America and India. There was a full house at the Black Labrador Restaurant, and the attendants were not disappointed.

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The famous Blue Hole in Belize where Professor Droxler did most of his research

## Famous underwater cave offers sedimentary evidence

The ancient Mayan civilization, known for its monumental contributions to art, science, astronomy and architecture, was probably wiped off the earth by a 100-year drought.

Although drought has been previously theorized as one of the causes of the Mesoamerican civilization's decline, a new study of underwater sediments off the coast of Belize lends further credence to that argument. The study was conducted by a team led by André Droxler, an earth scientist at Rice University in Houston, who told Live Science that he analyzed data from

multiple places in the former Mayan heartland.

The researchers extracted minerals from Belize's famous underwater cave known as the Blue Hole and the lagoons that surround it, and on analyzing them found evidence of a drought between A.D. 800 and A.D. 900 — a period that coincides with the Mayan decline.

Droxler also found that in the two centuries leading up to A.D. 1000, there were only one or two tropical cyclones every two decades as opposed to the usual five or six. "When you have major droughts, you start to get famine and unrest," he said.

André W. Droxler, Ph.D., is currently a professor in the Department of Earth Science and the director of the Center for the Study of Environment and Society at Rice University. As well he is a James Baker Institute Rice Faculty Scholar. Droxler received his master's degree equivalent from the University of Neuchâtel (Switzerland) in 1978 and earned his Ph.D. from the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Miami (Florida) in 1984.



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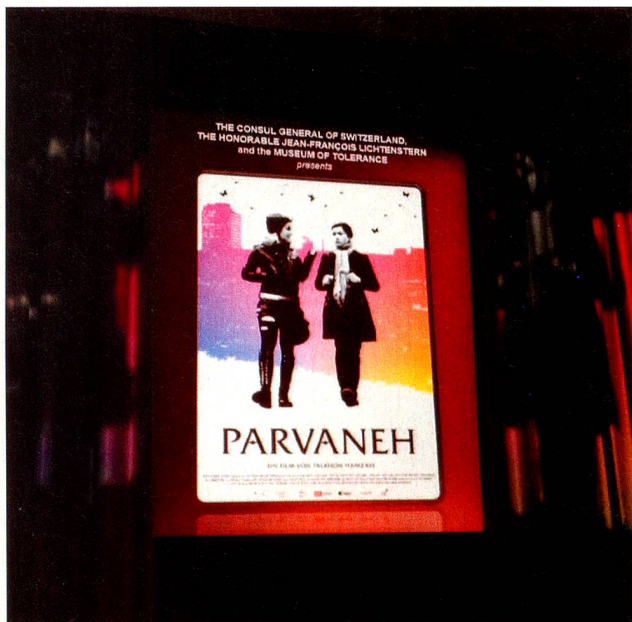


## California OSCAR Season

In January 2015, my duties led me to Soleure/Switzerland to attend the Solothurner Film-tage. This excellent intimate film festival dedicated to the Swiss film production celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> edition demonstrating that Swiss cinema is in good health, vibrating at a pace adapted to present day rhythm. The success of the Swiss cinema is due to skillful directors, actresses, actors as well as to bright pictures captured all over the world to offer the audience food for thought.

(Schweizer Helden/Unlikely Heroes, by Peter Luisi), gratuitous violence (Chrieg/War, by Simon Jaquemet), addiction (Driften/The Drift, by Karim Patwa), or love (The Circle, by Stefan Haupt, and What's between us, by Claudia Lorenz).

Leaving freezing Switzerland I was all set to face what Angelinos dare call winter thanks to the Hollywood-made imagination. Winter temperatures here often seem like spring, not to say summer... Let's just call it Oscar Season. A season characterized by storms of superlatives such as "The



Parvaneh the Swiss film nominated for the 2015 Oscar for Best Live Action Short Film, directed by Thalkon Hamzavi, produced by Stefan Eichenberger

Viewers in Solothurn could focus (and debate in the city's pubs late into the night) on such society themes as the right to die at the right time, meaning with dignity (Usfahrt Oerlike/Exit Oerlikon, by Paul Riniker), climate change (ThuleTuvalu, by Matthias von Gunten), human psychology (Yalom's cure, by Sabine Gisiger), sexuality (Dora oder die sexuellen Neurosen unserer Eltern/Dora or the Sexual Neuroses of Our Parents, by Stina Werenfels), immigration

most chilling thriller of the year", "The best and most important film of the decade", "Remarkable", "Brilliant", "Extraordinary", "A breakthrough", "Inspiring", "Breathtaking", "Stunning", "Mesmerizing", "Exquisite", "Astonishing", "Transcendent", "Powerful", "Riveting", "Irresistible", "A triumph", "Indelibly beautiful", "Above all", not to say "Surreal" or "Insane"... They form an avalanche sounding like a thunder of applause orchestrated by the golden



Celebrating the end of the Oscar season at the Swiss residence: Consul General Jean-François Lichtenstern with, to the left actresses Nissa Kashani, Shirin Caiola and Nathalie Klaus, and to the right Thalkon Hamzavi (director) and Anita Wasser (producer).

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knight shining over the world capital of entertainment: Oscar.

I just came back in time to enjoy this glamorous season and to support *Parvaneh* the Swiss film nominated for the 2015 Oscar for Best Short Film (Live Action), a wonderful creation made by young people mastering the art of Short film-making in combining perfection with concision. It was therefore a privilege for me to contribute to the Swiss short

movie's campaign in introducing a screening of *Parvaneh* at the Museum of Tolerance and in hosting a reception for media and members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at the Swiss residence. In 1991, Swiss director Xavier Koller won an Oscar with a movie entitled "*Journey of hope*". This year, as *Parvaneh*'s production team made their journey to California, we hoped they would travel back with the



Q & A at the Museum of Tolerance. Stephan Eichenberger and Thalkon Hamzavi with moderator, Matt Carey

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supreme Hollywood award. Unfortunately the nominees, Talkhon Hamzavi (director) and Stephan Eichenberger (producer) did not win "our" Oscar. The day following the Awards ceremony at the Dolby Theater, I had the pleasure to host the production team for a lunch celebrating the end of the award season. Here I had the opportunity to thank and congratulate them for having contributed to put Switzerland on the Hollywood map during this 87<sup>th</sup> Oscar season. Just being nominated is quite an achievement. As I mentioned above, Swiss cinema is in good health. Talkhon and the team she directed confirm the saying "True Value does not need the test of time" letting us to believe that Swiss movies have a bright future.



Lead actress Nissa Kashani during the Q & A

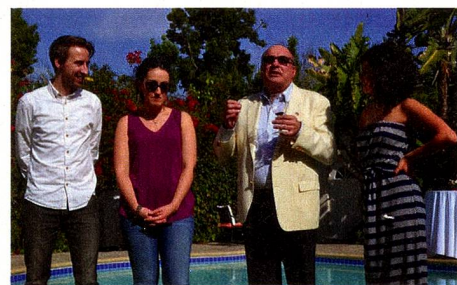
-4- Stefan Haupt's "The Circle" on the short list. However this world acclaimed masterpiece was nominated in Solothurn for the "Swiss Award" for the best fiction film among five productions. And the winner will be known on March 13, 2015 in Geneva, where the Swiss Film Award Ceremony will take place.

In the meantime I would

like to thank the Swiss movie industry for helping us think and dream big. I wish all moviegoers a pleasant new cinema year towards the 2016 Oscar season. As they say in Soleure: Bon

-5- nes projections!  
JEAN-FRANÇOIS LICHTENSTERN  
CONSUL GENERAL OF SWITZERLAND IN  
LOS ANGELES

To know more about all above-mentioned movies, please visit [www.Swissfilms.ch](http://www.Swissfilms.ch)



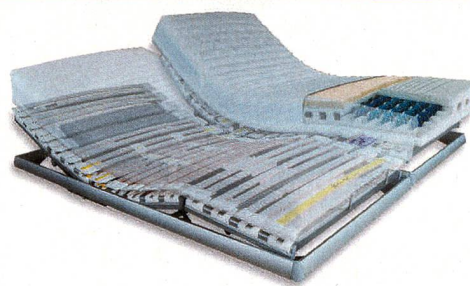
Consul General J.-F. Lichtenstern giving a toast

I also had the privilege to accompany the Swiss Oscar contender for the Best Foreign Language Film, *The Circle* by Stephan Haupt. My contribution to the campaign orchestrated by a professional PR – and which started under the umbrella of the Consulate General of Switzerland in New York – followed the same script: screening at the Museum of Tolerance and reception at the Swiss Hancock Park's Residence. Lots of fans were disappointed not to see



Chocolate cake with fresh raspberries - who could resist?  
A sweet finish to the Oscar season.

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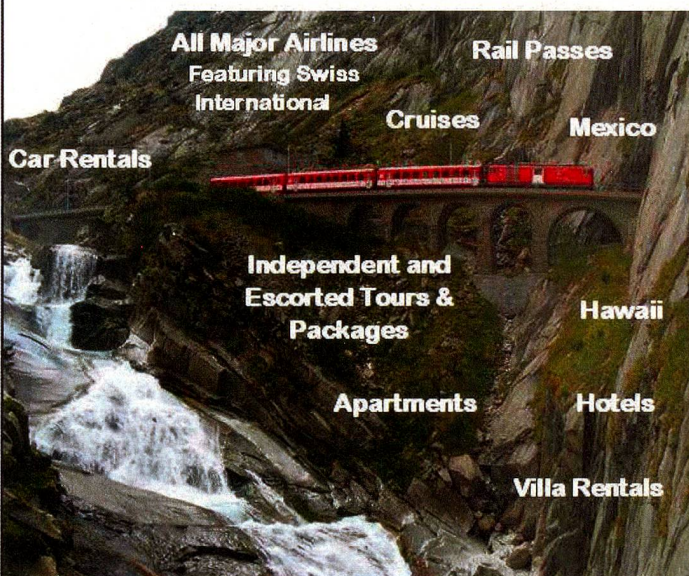
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### Invitation from Switzerland

Dear friends across the world

In the course of this year, members of Swiss Clubs from all over the world will meet for the first time at the Domaine de Penthes in Geneva.

Swiss Clubs, wherever they may be, not only form an essential link

amongst the Swiss abroad in any given part of the world - with some members living there for several generations by now - but also a link between its members and their country of origin. Indeed, all together they belong to what could be termed the Swiss World Network.

For forty years now, the Domaine de Penthes has hosted the Foundation for the History of the Swiss Abroad, its museum and its research center. One of our key aims at Penthes is to develop and to support projects, which contribute to preserving and enhancing the heritage of the Swiss Abroad.

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#### Program:

- Wednesday, August 12, 2015 - arrival, visit of the Museum of the Swiss Abroad
- Thursday, August 13, 2015 - meeting day, Gala dinner
- This meeting will be linked to the Annual Congress of the Organization of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), which will be held in Geneva from August 14 to 16, 2015.

Wishing all Swiss

Review readers in

the United States

a Happy Easter!

Wal Baur

Editor



WAL  
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