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Poets and bookworms

Solothurn's narrow streets are packed with throngs of visitors from near and far in mid-May. The Literature Days are a meeting point for authors, avid readers, journalists, the culturally minded and politicians. They come from Switzerland and abroad. At many events, which often ran in parallel, over 70 authors presented their latest books this year. They also included guests from abroad. The audience was enthralled by



German novelist Ralf Rothmann and the Icelandic author and musician Sjón. In addition to readings and discussion sessions, authors, publishers and the audience also meet very informally in the bars of the old town. Even Federal Councillor and Culture Min-



ister Alain Berset took part in a discussion session this year – on his feet and with a beer.

The website of the Solothurn Literature Days contains brief portraits of all the authors (in several languages). Its archive can be explored and vouchers obtained for the next festival. This is an addictive site for book lovers. The festival takes place from 6 to 8 May in 2016.

(RG)

www.literatur.ch



Federal Councillor Alain Berset in discussion with the author Lukas Bärfuss

National anthem sought

They are beautiful and deeply moving, the celebratory occasions when, on 1 August or at sporting events, the Swiss national anthem is played. Quite often such celebratory moments are also a little embarrassing as the Swiss anthem is difficult and grandiose and most Swiss people do not know the words beyond the third line. That is now set to change – a competition to find a new anthem is underway where everyone can contribute towards deciding which text set to which tune should raise Swiss hearts in future. A total of 208 entries were received in the first round

of the competition, three of which have now reached the final stage. They can be heard online where they are wonderfully interpreted by the Swiss youth choir. The online vote, in which the Swiss Abroad can also take part, runs until 6 September. The final will then take place on 12 September at the folk music festival in Aarau.

(BE)

Voting is taking place at: www.chymne.ch



Quiz app on politics and the elections

Those who enjoy improving their knowledge in a fun way will really enjoy the “politbox” app. Based on the notion that “politics covers everything and you are the expert”, the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR) has created an app which is of course free of charge and available for both android and iOS. Topics include sport, geography, languages, the environment, politics, restless youth, Europe and political scandals. Each topic can be played at four different levels. Under political scandals, one question at level one, for example, is the name of Switzerland's first female Federal Councillor. You

have to work your way up in each topic area as those with better knowledge cannot start immediately at level 4. In addition to the test of knowledge, questions are also asked about views on current issues. Those behind the app say this survey format enables opinion to be gauged amongst those interested and their concerns to be identified. The app is available in the four national languages and English.

(BE)

www.politbox.ch

