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Annik Grob



Annik Grob, 12, lives happily with her family in Therwil in the canton of Basel-Landschaft. She isn't thinking of emigrating any time soon. For a competition organised by the German Emigration Center museum in Bremerhaven, Annik imagined, however, that she was a young girl leaving her home country. "What ten things would you pack if you emigrated?" was the question that the museum asked children and teenagers to answer, inviting them to choose the contents of their own personal "emigration suitcase". The eleven most creative entries – Annik's included – featured in a special exhibition.

The schoolgirl impressed the jury with her idea of packing a lengthy book in addition to nine other things. "Any book about horses that has 20,000 pages so I can read it for a very, very long time," she wrote. "Which is about as long as I'll need to learn the local language and buy books in my new home country." And if she failed to learn the lingo in that time, she could start the book again, "because I would have definitely forgotten the beginning 20,000 pages later".

Annik's items also included a radio, a CD of rap artist Namika, a camera, clothes, money, a case holding 40 colouring pencils, her identity card, some jewellery, and her riding-school horse Resuelto. Her suitcase has at least got as far as Bremerhaven. Seven million people embarked on the long journey to the New World from the North Sea port in the 19th century. Annik can certainly envisage moving to a different country one day. "Staying put in the same place is boring."

THEODORA PETER

Apprenticeships are losing ground

The practice-oriented apprenticeship is a Swiss success story. However, its popularity is declining among the young, who are increasingly turning to grammar school (Gymnasium) on completion of their compulsory schooling. This is particularly evident among girls, with one in two targeting a grammar school place. As a result, there were 15,000 vacant apprenticeships at the start of the 2019 Swiss academic year. That is problematic for many companies. (MUL)

Lukas Bärfuss receives the Georg Büchner Prize

For the first time in 25 years, the most prestigious literary prize for German has been awarded to a Swiss national: author and playwright Lukas Bärfuss (1971) is the winner of this year's Georg Büchner Prize worth EUR 50,000. He will receive the award on 2 November in Darmstadt. The jury praised Bärfuss as an "outstanding essayist and playwright of contemporary German literature". Bärfuss views today's world from an uncompromisingly questioning, curious and appreciative perspective. (MUL)

Historic women's strike

The women's strike on 14 June 2019 (see "Review" 3/2019) was the largest political demonstration in modern Swiss history. Hundreds of thousands of women participated in the day of action, and stopped work. The strike achieved historic dimensions in all major cities. Its main demand was equality for women in the workplace and in society, with the slogan "equal pay for equal work". (MUL)

The Matterhorn is crumbling

The Swiss alpine symbol, the Matterhorn, is in the headlines: mountaineers want it to be closed following a number of fatal accidents. However, the local Zermatt council wants to keep it open. The accidents have been caused by rising temperatures: as the permafrost thaws, parts of the secure route on the Matterhorn have collapsed, say the mountaineers. Melting permafrost is a problem shared by all Swiss alpine areas. (MUL)

Criticism of arms exports

Swiss voters are going to have their say on arms exports, as the signatures required for the Correction Initiative were gathered in record time. The initiative was submitted in June and is a response to the Federal Council's plan to export arms to countries engaged in civil war (see "Review" 3/2019 Editorial). (MUL)