

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 37 (1973)
Heft: [1]

Rubrik: Hedy's corner

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After Santa arrived in his red coat, big white beard and huge stuffed sack, most children followed him to the spot where he handed out presents and drinks. Around about 10 o'clock most guests got ready for their way home with tired but contented children who believe Father Christmas is a very nice man.

—R.E.W.

DIAMOND WEDDING MARKED

Mr and Mrs Jean Oettli of Eureka, celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary with their family in Hamilton recently.

The couple, who were married on 30th December 1912 in the Protestant Church at Erstfeld in Switzerland, emigrated to New Zealand with their sons Hans and Henry in 1956. Since then they have lived in their own cottages, first at Whatawhata and since 1966 at Eureka where today Mr Oettli enjoys doing small jobs around the farm while Mrs Oettli is an active housewife and keen cook, preparing meals in the continental way.

Mr Oettli was born in 1888, his wife in 1889. They have two sons, seven grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

—Waikato Times

★ Wellington Swiss Club

CHRISTMAS PARTY

On Saturday morning, 9th December, our Brooklyn Hall saw a beautiful Christmas tree being decorated and all sorts of preparations being made in order to receive Father Christmas and the children from our Club, together with their parents and other members. At noon the rain stopped, which had covered Wellington and had given it a wintry look, so that the playground could be enjoyed before and after the programme was on. The party started at 5.30 p.m. A group of children in colourful dresses sung and played the Christmas story, and Father Christmas not only had a present for all the children but also lovely things to eat. With a cup of coffee and some refreshments for the adults the party came to its end. We all hope to see Father Christmas again in a year's time.

—M.K.

★ HEDY'S CORNER

A new school year is soon starting. For some of your children this might entail a brand new experience and activity. I am thinking of music as offered in many schools in the form of class tuition for wind and string instruments in particular.

Such classes are either held in the schools themselves or are organised as after-school activity, especially on Saturday mornings. You probably know that such classes are held under the auspices

of the Education Department and are completely or nearly free of charge. Being a musician myself I would like to make a few comments about this admirable activity offered.—

The main advantage is that your child can try the instrument of his choice. If he likes it, well and good; if he does not, it could be that the uniformity of class tuition irks him, the pace could be too slow or too fast. Unfortunately this form of music instruction is of necessity impersonal and “dry”.

After about three months it is advisable for you to go and speak to the class teacher about your child. If he has pronounced talent this could be noticeable already after that time. If you feel your child likes going to class tuition, but cannot follow the pace set, go and attend lessons to gain knowledge of what is being taught. Most class teachers welcome interest shown by parents and it could make all the difference to the learner's progress if you can assist his practice knowledgably.

If your child shows definite aptitude, take him away from class work immediately and send him to be taught privately if at all possible.

As much as this scheme has its advantages, it can on the other hand ruin a talent. In groups the child cannot hear what his tone quality is, nor if he plays in true pitch. He probably will revolt and stop learning. Such a child should be left in a class no more than a year, otherwise his true ear gets damaged as well as the finer, individual points which cannot be enforced, due to the number a class teacher is expected to cope with.

Many centres have such demand for class tuition that the qualified teaching staff is far too small in numbers and often very junior but good students of private music teachers assist with the teaching. For beginners this is certainly not ideal. Only the best teacher will do.

If your child warrants private tuition, do ask other parents how their child gets on with Teacher XYZ. Impressive qualifications do not automatically mean a superior gifted teacher. It is also not so much the number of successful pupils a teacher can put to his credit at examinations, but I would go by the criterion whether a pupil is **happy** working with his teacher. Steady, enthusiastic and imaginative, conscientious guidance is what I recommend you to look for.

Finally, there may also be junior orchestras in your town. If such orchestras are duly graded as to ability and trained by a first-rate person, then they are excellent for your child to join. If in doubt, go to a rehearsal to hear for yourself, or ask someone knowledgable.

Good luck to your budding geniuses, and bear with the early queer sounds evoking from their instrument!