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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

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Man muß die Wahrheit leben,
nicht nach ihr suchen.
Sathya Sai Baba

TOURISM WITH HUMOR

Tourist offices anywhere in the world report that tourists often ask them the most stupid and outrageous questions. The local tourist offices in Switzerland are no better off and here are some of the most incredible questions they were expected to answer:

- In which country are we actually?
- Where can I get my ears cleaned?
- Is there a disco in town where I can go and dance in my slip?
- Which hotel would allow me to stay in with my pet monkey? (must have been Michael Jackson).
- Where do I pick up my ferry to Amalfi? (Amalfi is near Naples)
- When does the ship leave for Tunisia? (and this in the middle of Switzerland).
- Can you give me the address of a topless hairdresser.
- Can I take my dog into the hothouse at the Botanical Gardens?
- How many times a day are the geraniums on the Kapellbrücke (Lucerne) being watered? (this was before the fire that destroyed the bridge).
- Does snow only fall during the night?
- Will it be raining here in 3 months time?

Then there was the tourist who wanted to know if he could have his denture repaired and to prove his point, he took it out of his mouth and showed it to the tourist office attendant.

In Lucerne, an American tourist wanted to know where he could take the cable-car to Geneva! Another inquired about the motorway to the top of the Jungfraujoch and a lady insisted on taking a boat direct from Lucerne to Interlaken.

In St Moritz, the tourist office often receives requests in the middle of the skiing season for accommodation in Deluxe hotels which must not exceed SFR30 or for complete holiday apartments for 4 people for no more than SFR50.

Some tourists travelled specially from Berne to St Moritz to buy "long shoes". Why in St Moritz? Because they heard that people in the Engadin walked barefoot in the past and therefore have especially well developed toes, hence longer shoes...

DINOSAURS BACK IN JURA

Adjacent to the caves of Réclère in the Ajoie (Jura) which already attract some 20,000 visitors per year, a new prehistoric park will open up in a few months time. The idea comes from Eric GIGANTET, the owner of the caves who had planned to build such a park well before the "Dino boom" was unleashed by Spielberg's Jurassic Park film. Over an easy walk of some 2 km, visitors can watch the evolution of the world over a period of 600 million years. Naturally the focal points of the park will be the 15 different, life-size dinosaurs specially re-created by 2 local Jura artists. If there is to be a real Jurassic Park, what better place to put it than in the Jura. After all, that is where the name comes from.

ILLUMINATED PILATUS

Enlightened idea or environmental desecration? Since 1991 new halogen search lights illuminate the top of Mount Pilatus. It was hailed as a well thought out tourist gag according to the Pilatus railways, but branded as an optical environmental desecration by the Greenies who wanted to take the matter to the Federal Courts. The Japanese tourists were delighted which is exactly what the Directors of the Pilatus railways wanted.

A further argument was that no building permit had been requested or granted. But Hergiswil, on which land the 9 halogen lights were installed claimed that a permit was not necessary. However, belatedly in 1992, the Building Department of Nidwald requested that a proper building permit be applied for...

Adversaries of the scheme claim that sun and moon are sufficient lighting to illuminate the Pilatus and want the halogen lights dismantled. They fear that the idea might spread to other mountain tops.

Finally a compromise was worked out. The lighting is only allowed to be switched on during clear nights and then only for 2 hours and, in wintertime, only on weekends. The Pilatus railways are reasonably satisfied but the "Heimatschutz", the "Alpen Club" and other opponents are far from happy with this compromise and so the battle goes on.

DEARER FINES

The Federal Council has decided to increase traffic fines from the present maximum of 100 SFR, which dates back to 1970, to 300 SFR, a 30% increase. So parking in the wrong place or driving over the speed limit may become a very costly affair in Switzerland, just the same as in New Zealand.



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