

President's message

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Editorial

A new year - a new beginning - and an apology.

Lots of editorials deal with the deeper meaning of life at this time of us facing a new year full of anticipations.

So, what difference is it going to make to our daily life to have to replace the number seven with the number eight on our date during the next eleven months?

Since I am no good at crystal-ball gazing I can but tell you of my usual "New Year Motto" which has stood me in good stead so far, and that is "There but for the grace of God go I!" - It reminds me of my creator God, assures me of my "purpose of being", it gives me hope that good will always triumph over evil, even in times when chaos seems to reign supreme in our "broken" world. It reminds me that because I receive so much goodwill and charity from

within the circle of people surrounding me in life, I am in turn duty bound to try and use every occasion, as it presents itself to me, to be a support and hope in someone else's life, whenever possible. It keeps me humble, reminds me that I am but a very small part in God's design and yet able to love, to hate, to mourn, to rejoice, to forgive and that I am free to choose between good and evil, free to take responsibility for all my actions.

What will this year of 1998 hold for our adoptive country New Zealand and our country of origin, Switzerland? We will know in due time; but for Switzerland I know it is going to be a jubilee-year, celebrating 150 years of modern statehood with a constitution dating back to 1848. The draft-reform of the **new constitution** prepared during the past 30 years, is due to be considered by the Federal Parliament in the coming

months. Meanwhile a wide range of official activities will mark the 150th anniversary of the old constitution throughout Switzerland. It includes a series of travelling exhibitions. The program of events was recently unveiled in the Federal Parliament Buildings by the Interior Minister Ruth Dreyfuss before an invited audience of school children.

And now in order to proceed in the new year with the ability to remember the past year with "peace of mind" I would like to apologize sincerely to the Wellington Swiss Club for a most unfortunate mistake in the December Issue of *HELVETIA*. During the final setting of the different articles a most important part of the report "Wellington Swiss Club 40th Anniversary Celebration, 25/26 October 1997" was inadvertently omitted. On page 10 you will therefore find the complete article printed as received originally from the Secretary of the Wellington Swiss Club, Michelle Koeppel-Schneider on the 14. Nov. 1997.

Editor R.Rust.

President's Message

Welcome to 1998 and this year's first issue of the *Helvetia* - my best wishes to everyone for whatever the New Year will bring you. I hope everyone enjoyed a pleasant Christmas and had a chance to relax at some stage during the recent holiday period.

As always at this time of year, many of you will have had people from Switzerland come and stay. Those visitors who came earlier in December were able to sample the festive season during the heat of our summer instead of their traditional Christmas in winter which we only really experience on Christmas cards, or by feeling sorry for "Santa" when having to wear his suit and beard! But in any case, I hope that your long unseen relatives and friends had or are having a pleasant stay here in New Zealand, and that you were, or are still able, to enjoy their company before their travel homewards. And speaking of travel, like the Delegate for the Swiss Abroad, I too have been corresponding with Swissair's agent here in New Zealand, Mr. Darragh Walshe. I'm pleased to say that a start has already been made to re-establish a

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closer association between Swissair and the Society. Recently, Darragh sent me four CD's which had been specially compiled for Swissair as part of the 1997 Montreux Jazz Festival. These will probably be used as a prize of some sort in the near future. I would like to thank Swissair, firstly for this gesture, but most especially, for making the effort, as "our airline", to renew a past relationship with the Swiss Society and Community, which had sadly dwindled for such a long time. I hope that we can now build on this new beginning.

With my kindest regards,

Beatrice.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Following some controversy and a complaint from Wellington Swiss Club regarding the letter to the Editor in the December/January issue of Helvetia the Editing Team has decided that letters to the Editor will in future only be accepted for printing using either the writer's name or a chosen nom-de-plume (**no initials**)!

However the original letter must include the writer's full name, address and signature and these details will remain confidential to the Editor.

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YOUR CORNER

Well, Christmas is over once again, and I can honestly say that I'm relieved. Life seems to become so hectic and stressful before Christmas, and thankfully things have slowed down since. And I must say New Year's Eve came and went very quietly for us (Having to get up at 5 a.m. the next morning could have something to do with it!)

However, I have heard that a lot of our Swiss friends celebrated long into New Year playing Jassen and enjoying traditional food and drinks. One of our friends, who happens to be a fellow Hamilton Swiss Club committee member (I daren't mention any names!) even made it on the front page of the Waikato Times Newspaper with his traditional way of celebrating New Year's Eve. Apparently, every year he takes part in a "Burning Butt Championship" where a rolled newspaper is wedged between their "butts", the paper is lit, and you have to take tiny steps towards the finishing line without getting your 'butt' burnt! No doubt if things get a little heated they would have jumped into the nearby ocean to cool off! And I'm pleased to say that our friend has remained the reigning champion. After reading the article and having had a good laugh about it my mind went back to a Swiss Society A.G.M. a couple of years ago where it was discussed that one of the events in the competitions was biased towards 'strong' farmers and it was suggested a different sport be used that would be fairer. I wondered if the 'Burning Butt' Competition would be appropriate!!!

Thanks to the people who have written in saying they enjoy reading Your Corner, and please send in any contributions or ideas to us.

Doris and Trudi.

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Contributions from our Delegate to the Swiss abroad, Heinz Leuenberger.

YOUTH CAMPS IN SWITZERLAND

If you have read the latest "Swiss Revue" of 0 6/97 - you will have seen the articles about this year's camps.

There are five in all for the 15 - 25 year olds, starting in April.

The August camp is arranged so that participants can attend the 76. Congress for the Swiss Abroad.

Seven camps for the 7 - 14 year olds will also be held. They take place during July and August. Upon application, the Foundation may reduce the costs by as much as sFr. 200.- do sFr. 750.-. In some cases the Secretariat may help with travel costs.

Applications can be made directly to the Secretariat or to me.

During the meeting with Dr. Wyder at the Secretariat in Berne last October, he intimated that the Directorate is keen to see New Zealand, one of the last countries to take part in the youth camps, if at all possible.

P.S. I'm looking for a person or persons to take on the organizing and co-ordination of all matters concerning Youth Activities. It would suit anyone interested in that type of activity. Please give me a call.

Also contained in the last "Swiss Revue" is the programme for this year's Congress, to be held in both BADEN and LENZBURG.

With 1998 being a year of festivities (150 years of Bundesstaat) the Congress will be of particular interest. If you plan a trip back to the old country, why not go for it!!

You meet so many interesting people from all over the globe. (N'est-pas, Ruedi?)

SWISSAIR

Most compatriots are probably aware that for the past few years, Swissair, like so many other airlines, have been experiencing the effects of the extreme competition in the field of international transportation. Far-reaching restructuring was necessary, resulting in redundancies and all of the other side-effects that