

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 64 (1998)
Heft: [5]

Rubrik: Your corner...

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In the minutes of the Society AGM of 1997 the previous editor of *Helvetia* was quoted as saying that some advertisers felt there was not enough support for the products or services they advertise in the *Helvetia*.

In this context I would like to tell you about my own recent little "promotion", which might be emulated by other members of Swiss clubs. As a "girl" from St.Gallen I am particularly fond of a certain brand of Swiss chocolate...(advertised in the *Helvetia*!). Therefore I approached the importer and he agreed to give a very generous discount on chocolate and biscuit prices if a certain amount was reached. With the help of a very persuasive catalogue and detailed price lists, I was able, within three weeks, to gather orders from the Swiss Club and other friends for over \$1000.-. It involved a little bit of organisation and paper work on my side, but it was well worth the effort, because we enjoy excellent chocolate without straining our wallets and I have seen very happy faces all around (including the importer!).

Suggestion to Swiss Club (committee) members:

Do approach advertisers (chocolate, cosmetic products, fine delicatessen, bakery etc.) and ask for special deals for bulk orders.

Suggestions to advertisers:

Take the initiative and approach the Swiss Clubs with catalogues and price lists with discounted prices for bulk orders. You could generate good business.

Give it a go !

Michelle Koeppel Schneider, Wellington.

Looking for a job opportunity

I'm a 27 year old Swiss female, qualified animal attendant/caretaker. I'm also a qualified shop assistant. I have language skills in; Italian, German and English. I need a job offer from an employer in New Zealand to get a work permit.

Who needs a good worker ?

I'm practical, always with a smiling face and good with animals and people. The offer should have something to do with my qualifications/skills. (Horsetrekking, Farmstay, Farmshow, Backpackers, Bed and Breakfast, Animalpark, Deerfarm, Tourist outfit in general etc.)

Give me a chance, please !

My name and address in Switzerland: Liliana Vedana, Bruggli 3, 8754 Netstal, Switzerland

My temporary address in New Zealand: Misty mountain Farm, c/o. Sygove, P.O. Box 57, Omapere, Northland.

YOUR CORNER.....

We were delighted to receive the following Society Member's profile from Michelle Koeppel-Schneider, former secretary of the Wellington Swiss Club. Thanks Michelle for your input and for your positive comments about YOUR CORNER.

Society Member's Profile: Roland Schütz, Wellington

Little did Roland Schütz know of the great adventure that lay before him when he boarded a train from Thun to Calais and embarked on the ship to Dover on January 30, 1964. He was 23, good looking, a mechanic by profession, he came from Ramsei im Emmental and did not know a word of English.

He travelled in the company of his friend, 1 suitcase and 2 pieces of hand-luggage. In London he left the luggage at the left-luggage and the next day he discovered that the bag containing some clothes, his English dictionary and transistor-radio (with some money hidden inside) was gone. No time for tears, the train for Southampton was waiting! Arrived at the port, the two boys from Emmental were overwhelmed by the size of the "MS Rangitoto" - they had never seen anything so big on lake Thun.....!

Despite their lack of language skills they got along fine on the ship, after befriending some Austrians and Germans also bound for New Zealand. They sailed by Curaçao, Balboa, through the Panama Canal. In Tahiti they toured the island with the help of a charming, French speaking nurse of the ship-crew. Amazed at the great beauty of the girls (they had never heard the name Gauguin before), they attended a dance at the Tahiti Hotel and thought they had found paradise...

Finally they arrived in Auckland in stormy weather on March 3, after a good-bye party with drinks à discretion for £1 -S.10! Roland's first impressions of Wellington after a whole night on the train were mixed - he did not much care for the food, pies and tea, the wooden

houses looked unfamiliar and the day was grey. He was met in Wellington by the Immigration Service, who were housed in the Trentham Immigration Hostel - next day he started looking for a job. Despite all the papers and diplomas he had to have translated and submitted in Switzerland for his immigration visa, nobody here seemed to have a clue what his profession was and he was at a loss to explain it. So first he first was interviewed for a job as electrician, then he started with General Motors at the assembly line. He immediately started to attend an English course which helped him to settle into NZ life. He worked at General Motors for 3 months until his English had improved and he found employment in a mechanical workshop.

It took him and his friend three months to find the local pub in Trentham: they worked until 8 pm, and so the pub's business hours coincided much with theirs. It was by pure accident that they found it open on a Saturday. At the Trentham Hostel he soon made friends with some Austrians and together they spent many of their weekends hunting in the Tararua ranges, or tramping and skiing with the Hutt Valley Tramping Club. Sometimes they drove overnight to Mt Ruapehu - a furniture van was converted into a "sleeping car" by putting some mattresses on the floor...! In those times there weren't many temptations to spend money on - therefore they saved it up and bought a second car, a Nash '38, and thereafter their outings became more frequent. Life in general was good, the working hours were long but they took it easier than today, there was no shortage of work and jobs were easy enough to find.

After a while he left Trentham Hostel and started flatting with some friends in

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Lower Hutt. They had good relations with the Greek girls working in the kitchen of the Lower Hutt Hospital across the road and the young men enjoyed their tasty Greek food - a welcome change to the usual fare.

In 1966 Roland decided to try Australia. He stayed about 8 months, working in Sydney and travelling around Australia. Then he felt it was time to go back to Switzerland. However, in Switzerland he missed the spontaneous and encouraging friendships of the NZ work-place, the possibility to move up and forward, to be flexible and innovative. So, after 8 months, he packed his bags again and returned to New Zealand - and to his future wife, whom he had met on the passage from Australia to Switzerland.

He was able to go back to his former employer and eventually he got married. His wife was a beautiful Maori girl and through her yet another new world was opened to Roland. He was invited into the extended Maori family, learned a lot about their customs and traditions. He discovered that his own strong roots in a rural and traditional family and village environment helped him to understand and to relate to the Maori family much better than many other Europeans in those years. Open and hidden racism were not so rare in the sixties and his search for a family home almost failed because of his "mixed marriage". Fortunately his employer provided him with a house in Petone, where he still lives today.

In 1974 Roland and a partner started their own business, "Swift Engineering",

a tool making company. At the time, they needed only a three-figure sum of money but lots of dedication and hard work, but it turned out well and today he employs 7 people.

In the meantime two girls were born into his happy marriage, but after the birth of the second child his wife was diagnosed as suffering from leukemia. Despite her incurable illness she studied Maori history and language and was able to pass the love for her culture on to her children. After her tragic and premature death, Roland was left to look after 2 girls, 9 and 12 years old. He took his challenge and responsibility upon himself without much assistance from outside and he helped the girls to grow into two young women who are obviously as proud of their Swiss father as of their Maori family.

While he only sporadically attended events at the Swiss Club in the beginning, Roland was more active in the eighties and promptly became President for a few years until 1991 and last month he was elected President again. He is well liked in the Swiss Community; he is tolerant and open to different opinions, he knows a lot about New Zealand and he never disappoints his audience when they ask for an interesting and amusing story or comment.

Roland says he never suffered from home-sickness for Switzerland. He appreciates that his emigration has helped him to develop his personality and horizon, to take decisions, to carry responsibilities and to create a material and spiritual life in a way he could not have

imagined in Ramsei. He likes the openness, flexibility and encouraging attitude of the New Zealanders he has met on his way.

On the other hand he values his roots in the rural tradition, believes in the deeply ingrained principles of steadfastness and loyalty of the hardworking farmers of the Emmental and cherishes his childhood memories. But he has inextricably and successfully linked up his life and family with New Zealand and Maori culture and he is right to be proud of his achievement.

I wish to thank Roland Schütz for the time he has taken to tell me about his life and his thoughts, much more of course than can be related in this small format, and I wish him well for his future private and public life in New Zealand. Michelle Koeppel Schneider.

Looking forward to hearing from you, especially now that the winter has set in and some of you might like to put pen to paper.....

Trudy and Doris.

Trudy Wilson
829 SH3/Otorohanga
R.D. 3
Te Awamutu

Doris Rust
872 Bayley Rd.
R.D. 3
Te Awamutu

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Special Request from our "2-Ladies-team" Your Corner....

We are planning to compile an article on **Immigration Issues** for Swiss citizens wanting to emigrate to New Zealand and would love to receive comments from recent immigrants. Your experiences and comments about immigration and gaining citizenship in New Zealand would be very helpful. We'll do our best to translate contributions written in German and we promise confidentiality.
Thanking you in anticipation:
Trudy and Doris.

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