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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In accordance with tradition, our 1998 Society AGM was once again held at Queen's Birthday Weekend, this year in Kaponga. I take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the members of the Taranaki Club who worked tirelessly in preparing for what was a most enjoyable weekend. We were all treated to warm hospitality, and excellent organisation for both the meeting and evening function afterwards. My personal favourite, the alphorn, was played beautifully by Ruedi Dudli. However, I intend to move away from another tradition. The minutes will still be printed in full for the next AGM, but I'd still like to tell you a little about the meeting - before next year.

Attendance was good, but unfortunately not very representative, with about 40 from Taranaki, 25 from Hamilton and only two each from Auckland and Wellington. Hopefully it will improve at next year's meeting. In my annual report, I was pleased to say that our committee has worked harmoniously together and has basically combined with the editing team, so we all have an input into the *Helvetia* and Society business. We meet about every two months, but six of us come together monthly to staple, label, fold, tape, bundle and pack close to 600 *Helvetia* magazines, a morning we all look forward to. This time is also really good for holding "mini-meetings", to catch up with the latest gossip (I mean, news!!). Our Society "Executive" has been re-elected, with the addition of the Swiss Abroad Delegate, Deputy, and Exchange Co-ordinator being ratified as ex-officio members. We have achieved a net increase of 23 members, and it is up to each of us to inform other Swiss we meet or know about the Society and Clubs. My thanks to those responsible for Club membership, and everyone else, for promptly advising me of their changes of addresses. Returned mail is now down to 1-2 monthly.

I myself have been busy working on looking for new advertisers and prospective sponsorship to boost our finances, and have had some achievements. During the year, I've also had calls from many people for a range of reasons and requests, and have spoken to a whole variety

of people. One call is particularly memorable. It came one evening from a couple, in Auckland at the time, travelling around the country last summer. The young woman said they loved New Zealand so much that they decided to marry here! They had already arranged the betrothal for the next day, before going up North, but they needed a witness. They couldn't quite go as far as asking just *anyone*, it should at least be someone Swiss, so could I perhaps oblige?! I gave her the number of a friend in Auckland, and still wonder occasionally how their families reacted....??

At last year's AGM, it was directed that a certificate be designed for our honorary members. As a result, I had the pleasure to present these to 15 people. However, it was quite rightly brought to my attention afterwards that I had missed someone (which is easily done when reading some 30 years of minutes!). At home, with the help of an approximate date, it wasn't hard to find - in fact, I found two! So, my sincere apologies to both Karl Waldvogel and Josie Flühler from Hamilton who served the editing committee for many years. These 17 people have given the Swiss Society many years of their time and services, and it is through their efforts and dedication that the Society is still active and functioning, so I offer my congratulations and appreciation to them all.

There were several other issues dealt with at the AGM, and I will continue my report on these in the next issue. In the meantime, I wish everyone a good start to the second half of the year! Beatrice.

HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE SWISS SOCIETY

Auckland

Arthur Müller, Max Bachman, Henry Sigerist, Hans Fitzi, Marie-Therese Melville-Schöpfer

Hamilton

Bert Flühler, Josie Flühler, Karl Waldvogel, Walter Unternährer, Herbert Stahli

Taranaki

Ruedi Dudli, Pauline Rowe, Charly Schuler

Wellington

Ruth Messmer, Lotti Napp, Lina Sutherland, André Schlegel

Annual subscriptions are now due for people who are "Society only" members, ie. you do not belong to one of the North Island Clubs. Could you please send your cheque for \$ 25.- to Beatrice Leuenberger, 44 Montgomery Crescent Hamilton together with this note.

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