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President's Message

To all our readers I send a warm welcome to 1999. I hope you enjoyed the festive season, ready to tackle the year ahead of us.

Recently, I was once again reminded of the role of our Society on a global scale. We often hear of the 'Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad' (Auslandschweizer-Sekretariat), but many of us don't really know the function of this organisation behind its very long and impressive name.

The Swiss Government holds the interests and well-being of its citizens living abroad in high regard, and this office exists to foster the continuation of this principle. One division, responsible for managing relationships with Swiss Abroad Organisations (Auslandschweizer Organisationen), produces a quarterly newsletter, ASO-Info, which is sent to Swiss organisations and institutions worldwide. I have translated the following Editorial of the December 98 newsletter (4/98), written by Mr René Lenzin, Head of Information and Publicity for over 6 years:

"Information to and from Swiss organisations and institutions abroad is one of the most important responsibilities of the secretariat. Citizens abroad, as well as the variety of Clubs, portray a significant perception of Switzerland to the world. Club representatives must be well informed of the activities and responsibilities of the secretariat, so that this can be passed on to members. They must also have some general knowledge of events and happenings in Switzerland, to be able to act as 'ambassadors' for Switzerland, and to present a positive image of our native country. The latter, in particular, has increased in importance over recent years, which is why the Swiss Clubs remain extremely valuable. Regular socialising, together with upholding Swiss activities and traditions, are of course necessary and important elements of Club life. However, I believe there should also be worldwide encouragement to develop initiatives leading to cultural exchanges, as well as a better understanding and higher awareness of Switzerland. For example, why not form a 'Friends of Switzerland' committee? This may seem to be a demanding suggestion, but it is probably the only way in which Swiss Clubs and

organisations can exist long term. Clubs must not only offer members the attraction of Swiss activities and camaraderie, but must also act as an effective body which is active in portraying and representing our country."

Other articles in the newsletter further discuss the role of Clubs overseas; and membership of an organisation which has been set up to promote the interests of Swiss Clubs worldwide, which I will tell you more about next month.

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad is organising camps for children aged from 7 - 14 years from all over the world during July and August. Here they can share adventures, as well as learn about their native Switzerland.

Meantime, I wish you all a continued enjoyable New Zealand summer.

Regards,

Beatrice

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Thank you to everyone who has sent us their business details for the planned directory. Your response has been encouraging, but we still want to know of many more businesses to enable the directory to be produced.

So, no matter how big or small your business is, let us know about it and we will then pass the information on to the rest of the Society.

To be included ph 07 843 7971 or fax 07 843 7941, or write to:

Directory, Beatrice Leuenberger,
44 Montgomery Crescent, Hamilton.
We look forward to hearing from you

Your Corner.....

Like our Editor recently, both Trudy and I have been asked to take part in a multi-cultural day at school, teaching children aged between 5 and 13 about Switzerland - preferably 'hands-on'.

I wondered how qualified I was, being a second generation Swiss, however the children enjoyed making a Swiss flag, completing a word-find and of course sampling Swiss cookies and chocolate!

It's nice to be able to pass on some Swiss culture to others.

For those of you who have an abundance of courgettes/zucchini's here's a recipe for a loaf to try. Can be buttered and freezes well.

Regards, Doris and Trudy.

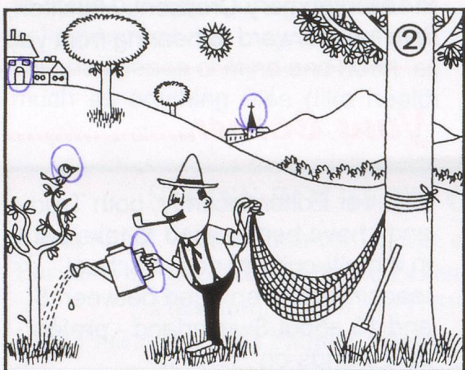
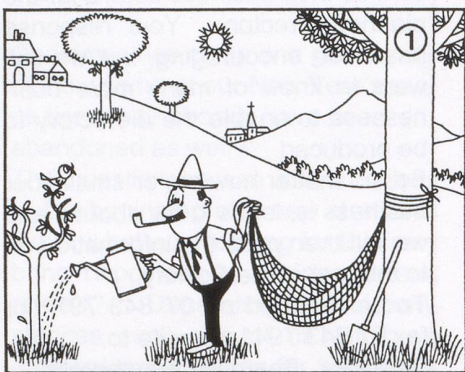
ZUCCHINI LOAF

- 3 eggs
- ¾ cup oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- 3 cups flour
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 and ½ cups sugar
- 2 cups grated zucchini
- 3 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons vanilla essence

-Beat eggs until light and fluffy, add sugar and oil and beat until thick. Add zucchini, sifted dry ingredients and vanilla. Lastly add walnuts. Bake in 2 lightly greased tins lined with paper. Cook in a moderate oven for 1 - 1½ hours.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

See if you can find the 9 mistakes in picture 2 - answer can be found on page 7.



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Surprise News from Switzerland

The Swiss Federal Councillors, Koller and Cotti, have announced (middle of January) their resignation to take effect in April this year. Koller and Cotti became federal councillors simultaneously but they apparently made the decision to resign independently and maintain there is no collusion in doing so.

CONTRIBUTION from our DELEGATE to the SWISS ABROAD

For those compatriots that are still interested in the well-being of the "old country", now more than ever is the time to apply and register with the Embassy for your voting rights! What happens in Switzerland may not hold much of importance for us first generation Swiss Kiwis who have no intentions of returning home to live. For the next and indeed future generations however, the question of Switzerland's position vis-à-vis the European Union may have important and far-reaching consequences, should they one day decide to go back even if only for a working holiday.

- Only 15 % of compatriots eligible to vote have so far registered.

The latest batch of material received from the Secretariat for the Swiss abroad, contained the following news:

EXPLANATION FROM THE FEDERAL COUNCIL regarding the conclusion of negotiations with the EU;

The federal Council feels that the result of the intensive, very often extremely difficult, four year-long negotiations are most positive. It is the Council's expectation that the seven contracts (all in one) will strengthen Switzerland's relationship with the 15 members of the European Union. The Council will do its utmost that the contracts are passed by Parliament and if need be, by the Sovereign as expeditiously as possible.

The conclusion of those sectional contracts provides the Federal Council with an important medium to improve our economy's compatibility and reduce the effects of our isolation within Europe.

P.S.

In this issue of "Helvetia" on page 5 you will find a flyer containing an article from the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung". The article gives you the relevant and accurate contents of the seven contracts.

- It would be presumptuous of me to try to translate it, as it's far to technical.

CHANGE OF TOPICS FOR THIS YEARS SESSION (6th to 8th August 1999 in Lausanne).

- After four years of negotiations between Switzerland and the European Union, agreement in seven selected sectors has at long last been achieved. (After a very nervous night, Federal Counsellor Maurice Leuenberger was informed at 0510).

- The sectors concerned are;
Mobility - Road/Rail Traffic - Air traffic - Research - technical Trading obstacles and Public procurements.

- The signing of the Agreement is expected to take place in March 1999, shortly after the Federal Council will submit this Document for Parliaments perusal. The two Chambers are expected to attend to this business during the Summer and Autumn Sessions. A Federal Referendum may follow as early as next year.

- During the coming months, Switzerland's relationship with the EU will no doubt provoke major public discussions not least because Federal Elections will take place on the 24. Oct. 1999. The most discussed sector of the Agreement is the "unimpeded" mobility within the EU including Switzerland. The question of mobility is as relevant to us Swiss Abroad as to everyone else. In view of the importance of the subject Europe, it would be hard to understand if it is not given a 'prominent place' at this years Congress in Lausanne. According to the regulations governing the workings of the Swiss Abroad Council (Art. 9 litt.h) the Congress agenda is chosen by the Council during its Spring Sessions (March) for the following year. In view of the importance of the upcoming discussions, Counsellors are asked to make their views and decisions known - post haste. My vote is affirmative.

Heinz Leuenberger
Swiss Abroad Delegate.

Congratulations
and best wishes to
Heidi and Heinz Leuenberger of Putaruru,
on the 40th. Wedding
Anniversary
celebrated on 26 January.
from Hamilton Swiss Club & Society

children who thought he was scarier in reality than on TV!

Bratwurst were barbecued for lunch, later followed by Swiss biscuits. The children enjoyed icecream cones, but had to do some fast licking to stop the sun from melting them.

Overall the 60 (approx) people present had an enjoyable day - a nice way to finish the year for our family members. HF



Ella Ammann
1911 - 1998

Ella died suddenly on 28 November 1998 after a long and happy life.

She was born in Weinfelden, Switzerland, in 1911. Ella and her husband, Ernst, together with their three children, emigrated to New Zealand in 1953. They farmed first in Eureka, and then in Komakorau in the Waikato for many years. Upon Ernst's retirement from farming, they moved to Hamilton.

She was a loving mother, and grandmother of eight grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

Ella was a foundation member of the Hamilton Swiss Club, where her services and commitment were much appreciated over many years.

Our condolences and deepest sympathy to Ernst and all the family, from both the Hamilton Club and the New Zealand Swiss Society.

Answers to the picture-puzzle from page 4.

The changes in picture 2 are;

1. The roof of the church is black
2. The tip of the spade handle is flat not curved.
3. The hammock is not so deep.
4. Both ropes of the hammock hang over the man's arm.

5. The handle on the watering can is square.
6. The falling drop of water is lower (closer to the ground).
7. The bird's beak is shut.
8. There is a gap between the chimneys on the house on the left.
9. Immediately above the door of the house is a small window.

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