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Autor: Rust, Rinaldo

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Editorial

The second Sunday in May !

One hundred years have come and gone since the tradition of Mother's day was established somewhere in America.

- One of my earliest childhood memories back in Switzerland is associated with first-year schoolwork, printing the word "MUTTER" MOTHER in capital letters on a small black school slate with writing 'guide lines' on one side and 'calculating squares' on the other with a wooden frame on the outside needing to be scrubbed every weekend to be ready for inspection on the Monday morning. Our elderly School teacher, (she was a spinster that

had already taught my Father some 30 years earlier), used the occasion of Mother's day to instruct us about the respect we should have not only for our Mothers but indeed even for the written word MOTHER.

- And now those memories remain as we watch the next 2 generations honouring their Mothers in turn. I'm sure there are people less fortunate than us who have but wonderful memories of loving Mothers or who can still treasure a close and loving relationship with their Mother. But we surely all have an obligation to honour either the person or the memory. Surely the sacrifice which motherhood demands in any case, in order to produce new life, is worthy of respect and reverence no matter how difficult or disturbed a rela-

tionship from generation to generation may be.



for Mother !

While we here in our adoptive country of New Zealand are and have been fortunate enjoying generous social security benefits for childbearing Mothers we may well remind ourselves that this is not so in all countries.

- Even in our so-called 'affluent' home country Switzerland there are still couples, (fortunately they are in the minority), who risk poverty by having one or more children, depending on the family income.

- On June 13 this year the Swiss are to vote on a more comprehensive, fundamental and state funded maternity benefit (Mutterschaftsversicherung), in accordance with all other European countries. Acceptance of the new law will help all Mothers but will be of special benefit, and is of urgent need, to help the 'bottom 20%' of families which are at present in danger of falling below the poverty line raising a family.

- I suppose it was inevitable that the proponents of the new law in Switzerland would make use of the occasion of Mother's day to promote the maternity benefit.

A news item on Swiss Radio International said the following;

- Government Ministers used Mother's day on Sunday to press their case for the yes-vote in next month's nation wide poll on maternity benefits. The President Ruth Dreyfuss told a rally in Berne that women should have the right to become mothers without having to worry about money. Speaking in Zürich, the Justice Minister Ruth Metzler said a yes-vote for the maternity benefit would be a yes-vote for the family which she described as a vital pillar of society. The day

SWISS SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

PATRON: Mr Walter Simmen, Chargé d' Affaires of Switzerland

PRESIDENT/TREASURER: Beatrice Leuenberger, 44 Montgomery Crescent, Hamilton, Ph.(07) 843-7971 Fax (07) 843-7941

VICE PRESIDENT: Bert Flühler, 1 Bettina Rd. Hamilton, Ph. (07) 855-4308

SECRETARY: Ruth Waldvogel, 89 Crosby Rd. Hamilton, Ph. (07) 855-3417

RIFLEMASTER: Peter Rust, Bayley Rd. R.D.3. Te Awamutu, Ph. (07) 872-2636

DELEGATES TO THE SWISS ABROAD CONFERENCE IN SWITZERLAND

DELEGATE: Heinz Leuenberger, 33 Russell Terrace, Putaruru, Ph/Fax (07) 883-8537

DEPUTY DELEGATE: Marie-Therese Melville-Schöpfer, P.O Box 79-294, Royal Heights, Auckland 1230, Ph. (09) 833-4029

COORDINATOR IN NZ FOR THE SWISS ABROAD YOUTH EXCHANGE SCHEME

Mrs. Nicole Helsdon, 58 A Marella Drive, Red Beach / Orewa, Ph. (09) 426-0927

EDITOR: Rinaldo Rust, 242 Te Pahu Rd. R.D.5. Hamilton, Ph/Fax (07) 871-9946 E-Mail: rinaldorust@xtra.co.nz

CLUB REPRESENTATIVES

AUCKLAND

SECRETARY: Albert Ryter, 32 Sunrise Ave. Mairangi Bay, Auckland, Ph. (09) 478-8547

HAMILTON

SECRETARY: Anita Zuber, P.O. Box 11-026 Hamilton, Ph. (07) 8562414

TARANAKI

SECRETARY: Doreen Schuler, Palmer Rd. Kaponga, Ph. (06) 764-6533

WELLINGTON

SECRETARY: Trudi Brühlmann, 1 Marine Drive, Mahina Bay, Eastbourne Ph. 04 562 8019

EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND: Panama House, 22 Panama St. Wellington, Ph. (04) 472-1593 or (04) 472-1594 Fax (04) 499-6302

HONORARY CONSUL: Peter Deutschle, P.O. Box 90-209, Auckland Mail Centre Ph./Fax (09) 366-0403. Email: deutschle@clear.net.nz

of action mentioned comes just 2 days after an opinion poll suggested that a majority of Swiss would vote in favour of the maternity benefit on June 13th.

Whatever the outcome of this nationwide vote, (with input from many Swiss abroad), the biblical proverb will stand; *Honour your Father and Mother that the days may be long upon the land which God giveth thee!*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In the April issue, I continued to summarise the results of a recent survey of Swiss Clubs throughout the world - statistical data, problems, recommendations, and Clubs into the future - which I hope has been of interest to you. Although we do share some of the problems and situations evident in other countries, on the whole we can consider ourselves to be a very healthy, secure, and well run organisation.

The questionnaire also invited the respondents to offer and share ideas for Club activities, resulting in a large range of replies. Some already apply to us, but there are others which we too may like to consider here in the future:

Traditional Celebrations:

- First of August, to be celebrated in traditional style
- Club Christmas celebration
- Christmas visits to elderly and/or single members.
- Fasnacht

Sports and Games:

- Formation of sport's clubs, eg hiking or tennis
- Cards (Jassen) or any other organised game's events.

Cultural Activities:

- Formation of choirs, orchestras, or dance groups (traditional or other)
- Organised group visits to films, concerts, plays, or other productions
- Local displays of works done by members, eg paintings, crafts etc
- Organised visits to local businesses, factories, etc

Continuing Education:

- Ascertain interests of members, and then offer courses (art, cooking, gardening, pottery, flower arrangement,

handcrafts etc)

- Language tuition, especially for children, in their 'parental' dialect or language spoken in Switzerland.

Welfare / Publicity Activities (An 'Information Campaign' with the purpose of helping raise awareness of Switzerland in the adoptive country):

- Raffles and Lotto
- Fundraising events (eg garage sales) and donations to selected charity organisations
- Encourage members to volunteer to help elderly or disabled citizens in the local community, by offering transport, shopping, visits, etc.
- Sale of homemade or typical Swiss products for charity fundraising.

Travel and Entertainment:

- Organised trips and tours
- Theme or surprise trips
- Group meals or functions (with typical Swiss or local cuisine), possibly followed by entertainment.

Although some of these suggestions could be helpful for our own Clubs, it is clear that Swiss Clubs around the world see themselves in different roles, depending on where they are. All provide basic Swiss cultural functions for their members, but do so with a variety of purposes, which fit into one of three categories:

- providing Swiss entertainment, fellowship, and education solely for the benefit of their members
- promoting Switzerland within their adoptive countries, and increasing awareness of Swiss organisations
- fundraising activities, especially aimed at supporting the local communities and charities.

This diversity in the purpose of Swiss organisations probably depends largely on the needs and conditions of the particular country in which they are. However the activities themselves are all still initially to bring people from within the local Swiss community together for cultural events and functions.

Many of the ideas raised here are already happening within our own Clubs to varying degrees, but there may be one or two suggestions we could consider introducing - for instance, someone may want to start up language sessions for children? And I'm sure there are some elderly members who would appreciate an occasional visit or Christmas gift!

Our AGM will be taking place shortly after this issue arrives in your letter boxes, and I look forward to meeting many of you there. The Wellington Club has put a lot of work and effort into organising a variety of activities, and I'm sure it will be a weekend not to be missed!

But, for the benefit of those people who are unable to attend, I will report on the meeting in the July Helvetia so that everyone has the opportunity to be fully informed.

So I hope you all have an enjoyable long weekend - and please all drive carefully and stay safe!!

With my best wishes for another month,

Beatrice

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ARE YOU CELEBRATING A SPECIAL EVENT OR OCCASION - MAYBE A BIRTHDAY, OR AN ANNIVERSARY ??

HAS THERE BEEN A RECENT WEDDING, OR A BIRTH, IN YOUR FAMILY ??

PERHAPS YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO DESERVES A SPECIAL MENTION ??

IF SO - LET US KNOW - INCLUDE A FEW DETAILS, MAYBE EVEN A PHOTO, AND SEND IT TO US (PRESIDENT OR EDITOR) SO THAT WE CAN ANNOUNCE IT!!

FLY SWISSAIR TO THE LOCAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

One highlight of the European musical year is without doubt the Montreux Jazz Festival.

Located in a most picturesque area of Switzerland on the shores of Lake Geneva, this year's festival takes place from 2nd to 17th July. It features stars including BB King, Elvis Costello, Alanis Morissette, Blondie, and many more, plus the best in Jazz and Soul performers from around the world.

More information can be found at: www.montreuxjazz or by contacting Swissair directly at Walsches World Airline Division, ph.09 358 3216 or Fax 09 302 2912.