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## Editorial

Festivals.....



Talking of summertime in Europe recently, one of my friends remarked that with all the many events that are held all over the country, Switzerland in summer could be turned into one big carnival fair. And it's true, as I well remember, there is hardly a village or hamlet that doesn't stage some sporting or cultural event. As a visitor to Switzerland you would find difficulty choosing between countless regional, cantonal, or national festivals that offer a fascinating insight in to the wide

range of popular mass cultural events. As is the case in any country, these events underline the strong sense of community among the people of Switzerland. Indeed many Swiss see their involvement in local club and association as a key part of not only their social circle, but also their home town identity.

One of the most popular associations that draws people in to its realm on a communal, continual, and federal level is **singing**.

On a communal level you may well find one or even two church choirs in a village, a men's choir (Männerchor), children's choir (Schulkinderchor), Lady's choir, or mixed-voices choir (Gemischtenchor) and maybe a yodeling club, (combining singing, yodeling with folkmusic). At regular intervals you will find cantonal sing- or yodeling

festivals and again at regular intervals of some four years a federal sing- or yodeling event will take place. Right now preparations are in hand for such a federal yodeling contest in Frauenfeld (Canton Thurgau) in July and we Swiss Kiwis may feel a good measure of pride in the knowledge that our very own Swiss Kiwi Yodel Group is to compete among hundreds of contestants from within Switzerland.

It can be said that a good number of Swiss Kiwis (here in New Zealand) in general have retained the love for singing even into the second generation. There have been and there are singing groups in our Swiss clubs, ready to enhance many a club activity. Who would be willing to measure the effort that is extended by group members to attend regular singing practices and who could measure the fun and camaraderie that is gained within these circles of hobby singers.

Singing has been and as far as I know still is part of the Swiss school curriculum. Singing in unison or together with 'simple harmony' is practiced from primary level upward, with most teachers expected to accompany the class with a musical instrument and many of the Swiss children learning to play the recorder at the same time.

From my own experience I can say that the habit of singing in our country of origin used to create a sense of 'balance in everyday living' and was able to enrich the lives of generations gone before. Sadly, we are told that the 'modern electronic media' (as is the case in many countries) has made great inroads in the practice of singing among the young Swiss population. But despite this new-age trend the proverbs in my dictionary hold true; "*singe wem Gesang gegeben*" - let the one sing, who has the ability and inclination to do so!, or ; "*Wo man singt da lass dich ruhig nieder*" - May you find your abode where singing is practiced!, "*Gesang ist die Sprache des Herzens*" - singing is the language of the heart.!

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