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EDITORIAL

Postcard From Switzerland.....

I think selecting and purchasing postcards from such an immense variety seems to be the hobby of tourists wherever they are to be found, including Switzerland. And what a handy invention these colourful postal greeting cards can be. I can think of a number of reasons why people might send them - they could be a straight forward greeting; or does the sender want to remind the addressee that he is not home for a while? Perhaps the reason is to create some envy because the sender is on holiday when everyone else is working hard, or does the traveller want to apologise for his tardiness in writing letters?

Whatever the reason, the postcard seems to serve a purpose and has done so for many a generation.

I don't know how many postcards we have sent since our arrival in Switzerland from New Zealand in mid-August, but I do know that we have been enjoying the most exciting time. So many impressions causing emotions to oscillate from 'very excited to exuberant....'

Let me describe some impressions of this present visit to Switzerland after 44 years of Kiwi life, with three prior visits in 1981, 1988 and 1994.

Arrival in Zürich-Kloten with grateful heart for a safe flight and soft landing. Lots of Swiss relatives, friends and acquaintances to greet us. After sharing some breakfast, guided to the money dispenser (Bankomat) - to be reminded of the very fragile value of our NZ currency!

Base: initially a holiday apartment in Lungern, Canton Obwalden, Central Switzerland, later Krummenau, in Toggenburg, Canton St.Gall.

Lungern is a most picturesque village with lots of tourist attractions. For us, nostalgic walks retracing holiday ventures of 1960; meeting relations and friends; paying respects to those since passed away by visiting cemetery; attending church services, complete with mighty sound of church bells ringing at beginning and end.

Swiss efficiency: evident everywhere, with lots of technology and very punctual, especially the SBB rail system with marvellous new rolling stock with double-decker coaches on some Intercity lines - running most comfortably and almost silent as though running on rubber wheels! The Swiss Rail Pass is very handy as there is no need to purchase individual tickets.

Swiss working day starts early (7 - 7.30am) with late finish (6 - 6.30pm) and with inevitable two hour lunch break (from midday to 2pm) only of nuisance value for tourists in my opinion.

Cleanliness evident everywhere in accord with long established reputation, but also some breakdowns showing with occasional litter and graffiti in public places.

Emotions: on call all the time! People friendly, with few exceptions. Memories of earlier days growing up awakened - the mountains are as majestic as ever. Nostalgia inevitable retracing steps of boyhood times - with continuous Swiss folk-music playing on Radio MW530, and church bells ringing...!

Swiss food: as good as memory promised! - enjoying Nussgipfel, Birnenweggen, fresh Weggli for breakfast, Bratwurst from St.Gall, Mettwurst, and lots of chocolate of immense variety.

Convention for Swiss Abroad in Zug, 19 August 2000: Very interesting discussions regarding Swiss School system of higher education, but of little value for Swiss-Kiwis, I think. Some negative thinking evident with anxiety expressed regarding future ability to compete with other highly specialised exporting countries. Some indication that the Swiss Government is considering electronic voting to be introduced for Swiss abroad, but consent from 26 Cantons and 3000 communes (Gemeinden) is needed.

With great excitement and joy we met our official representative of the

SWISS SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

PATRON: Mrs Sylvie Matteucci-Keller, Ambassador of Switzerland

PRESIDENT/TREASURER: Beatrice Leuenberger, 44 Montgomery Crescent, Hamilton, Ph.(07) 843 7971 Fax (07) 843 7941; bea.leun.rachel@xtra.co.nz

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, 4202 Pepepe Rd Naike, RD2, Huntly, 07 826 6711

DELEGATES TO 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

Nicole Helsdon, 58 A Marellen Dr, Red Beach, Orewa, Ph.(09) 426 0927

EDITOR: Rinaldo Rust, 242 Te Pahu Rd. RD 5, Hamilton

Ph/Fax (07) 871 9946, e-mail: rinaldorust@xtra.co.nz

CLUB REPRESENTATIVES

AUCKLAND

SECRETARY: Trudi Fill, 51 Clifotn Rd, Herne Bay, PObox 40 152, Glenfield, Auckland. Ph/Fax (09) 376 4923, e-mail: weidfill@win.co.nz

HAMILTON

SECRETARY: Anita Zuber, P.O. Box 11-026 Hamilton, Ph. (07) 856 2414

TARANAKI

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

WELLINGTON

SECRETARY: Trudi Brühlmann, 1 Marine Drive, Mahina Bay, Eastbourne, Wellington. 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, PO Box 90-209, Auckland Mail Centre
Ph./Fax (09) 366 0403. e-mail: deutschle@clear.net.nz