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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

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Marie-Therese Melville Schöpfer, with husband Sid, during conference. Marie-Therese indicated willingness to report separately and more extensively in a future edition of *HELVETIA*.

Weather in Switzerland: very hot and mostly fine during second half of August – drastic drop of temperature at beginning of September, appropriately announcing the beginning of autumn. Farmers busy harvesting second cut of hay; and also harvesting prunes (Zwetschgen), apples and pears – grapes as well by the time you are reading this...

Political scene in Switzerland at this time, mid-September heated discussions and uncertainty regarding voting on 24. September in view of initiative for limitations of foreigners to 18% of total population.

This *postcard* message comes to you by way of internet, thanks to today's modern communications technology.

Greetings to you all R.R.

President's Message

As you can see, our Editor is having a very enjoyable time in Switzerland, so I am grateful that he still took some time out to provide the Editorial for this edition!

Things seem to have been reasonably quiet in the clubs over the past month, but with Christmas coming up – yes, it's nearing that time of year again! – there will no doubt be several functions happening soon. However, Fondue seems to be the most popular event at the moment though, as the winter season draws to a close and the weather warms..

I'm really looking forward to seeing lots of entries for the Quiz on Switzerland – a real challenge for our young Swiss to find out a little bit about Switzerland's geography and history.

It's good to see some very interesting Swiss culture coming to New Zealand (see article, above right), and so I hope that as many people as possible can go along and support these cultural events. In addition, if anyone in Auckland is able to help out with billeting the quartet in early November, your help would be greatly appreciated.

Cultural Exhibition on Printmaking in Switzerland

(As advised by the Swiss Embassy)

Why make Prints ?

This Exhibition shows the development of printmaking in Switzerland, since 1960, in over 70 works by 51 artists. The works, grouped according to technique, document developments from screenprinting, to the experimental woodcut, engraving, lithography and, finally, the involvement of the computer. (See also *July / August Helvetia*)

Auckland 25 October - 17 November 2000
at University of Technology and University of Auckland, Fine Arts and Architecture Departments, 22 Symonds Street, Auckland.

Nelson 3 February - 4 March 2001
at The Bishop Suter Art Gallery, 208 Bridge Street, Nelson

Timaru 23 March - 29 April 2001
at Aigantighe Art Gallery, 49 Wai-iti Road, Timaru

Dunedin 14 May - 24 June 2001
at Otago Museum, 419 Great King Street, Dunedin

Festival of Europe

- During the period 1-7 November 2000, the **Bazin Streichquartett** from Switzerland will be coming to New Zealand to take part in the **Festival of Europe** taking place in Auckland at that time, and also to perform in other main centres in New Zealand. Details of concerts will be advised by the Embassy and published in the *Helvetia* when they are known.

It is hoped members of the quartett can be billeted by members of the Swiss Community in Auckland and other centres. Ideally, the quartett would like to stay together (for rehearsal etc) – possibly a holiday home is available for them?? However, any offers of billeting for one or two days are welcome. If anyone is able to billet one or more of the quartett in Auckland, please contact the Swiss Honorary Consul, Peter Deutsche, (09) 366 0404. For other centres, contact the Embassy directly – Mrs Louise Beale, (04) 472 1593.

The Embassy greatly appreciates the co-operation of the Swiss Community.

lucky to have the support of many businesses and organisations with their advertising in the *Helvetia*, which we very much appreciate. However, we are also always on the lookout for new advertisers. Our magazine reaches over 550 households throughout New Zealand, and is also sent to a number of libraries, 'Swiss' businesses, the Embassy, and various cultural organisations and societies similar to our own. I'm sure there are many businesses around the country which could benefit from an advertisement (at reasonable cost) targeted at 'Swiss' readers, and at the same time support the Society. For further details about rates and conditions, please give me a call on ph. 07 843 7971, or fax 07 843 7941. I look forward to hearing from you!

Welcome home to all those who travelled to Switzerland to visit relatives and friends – and escape the winter months here! Finally, Good luck to all our young competition entrants – don't forget to get your entries in by 15th October.

Have a good month, everyone.
Regards from Beatrice.



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