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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The latest newsletter from the Association for Swiss Abroad (ASO) arrived recently, containing a few snippets of information to report on, much of it to do with youth..

The 78th Swiss Abroad Congress will be held from 18 - 20th August, in Zug. Delegates will deal with a range of issues, but much time will be dedicated to the Congress' basic theme: education and vocational training for Swiss Youth Abroad in Switzerland, present and future. It will look at why many young people return to Switzerland for their further education and problems they face.

For anyone in Switzerland at the time, a visit may be worthwhile. Congress registration (as an observer) is due by 7 July.

The newsletter also reports on the successful youth winter holiday camps and skiing trips held recently. They were well attended from around the world and much enjoyed. To ring in the new millennium, ASO has launched its new Website. You can now look in on it for current events and information relating to Swiss Abroad. It will be constantly updated, and available in four languages - German, French, Italian, and **English**. I encourage anyone with internet access to visit this site - the address is: <http://www.aso.ch>

Not only will there be summer camps for Swiss Youth Abroad, but also the possibility of living in Switzerland with a host family for one to six weeks, with the option of attending a variety of workshops covering courses in (the Swiss) languages, as well as Swiss politics, industry, business, and economics.

For a copies of the newsletter, registration forms, camp leaflets, or any other information, please contact me (ph 07 843 7971, fax 07 843 7941).

Annual Picnics were the most popular events during February, and going by all the Club reports, these were all very well attended and much enjoyed by adults and children alike. Congratulations to Taranaki Club, who combined their Picnic weekend with the "Cowbell Competitions", for winning the semi-final against the visiting Wellington Club who currently hold the cow bell. Well done on winning all of the four

events.

Generally, it seems that there was also very high number of members taking part in those Society Sport's competition events held at Picnics (bowling, shooting and shot put). The high participation will of course mean that more medals can be awarded later in the year. Many thanks to everyone for joining in.

Sadly, an era has ended for the Wellington Club, who held the last function at their Ohariu Valley Club-house recently. Many memories will remain for you. Good luck in your current search for a new property, and best wishes for your future functions at a new venue.

Coming up during this month will be local Club AGM's. I'd like to encourage members to make the effort and attend these annual meetings to share your thoughts and opinions with others. Some of you may also be interested in becoming actively involved within your Club Committee, where your participation would be welcomed and much appreciated. This can be a lot of fun, and the diverse talents from a variety of people can help keep your Club thriving and active.

Once again, a reminder of the 2000 Society AGM at Queen's Birthday Weekend (3-5 June), hosted by Auckland Club. We would like to welcome as many members as possible, which also includes our many non-Club members. Any remits must be received, in writing, by 15th April (send to PO Box 4035, Hamilton East). The Agenda, and 1999 minutes, will be published in the next issue. I'm looking forward to meeting many members.

Best wishes to everyone, Beatrice.

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An Announcement from the Swiss Embassy in Wellington



Mr Walter Simmen would like to inform Swiss living in New Zealand that he is being transferred at the end of May 2000 to take up the post of Consul-General in Houston Texas, U.S.A.

He has been at the Embassy in New Zealand for nearly five years, with three and a half of those being as Head of Mission.

While Mr Simmen has enjoyed his time here, he is looking forward very much to a new country and work challenges.

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