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President's Message

Over the past few years, the use of computers as a means of communication has risen dramatically. The internet holds a wealth of information and e-mails are an inexpensive and fast way of corresponding with anyone around the world.

Although there is still some hesitation, even "mistrust", by some people towards computers, it is great to see that now even older people are beginning to benefit from using computers, once they have gained some confidence and understanding of how they work. And these days, there are numerous computer courses, especially designed for older people, in both cities and smaller towns. This has led to more and more people to have computers in their homes.

To this end, there is even an internet site especially designed for Swiss Abroad.

The site www.swissinfo.org is provided by Swiss Radio International - and this in eight languages! It has a wide variety of up-to-date news and information - including Swiss politics, business, sports, culture, social and current events. Even a regional weather report is available.

All the information is updated regularly, but it is also possible to locate past articles from the data archive. As well, over 6000 links are available to other sites - for instance the stockmarket, weather forecasts, maps, and even phone number searches. *(Personally, I have found being able to look up international phone / fax numbers and addresses on the internet very useful on many occasions.)*

Another internet site worth visiting is <http://www.swisshelpdesk.org>. Here you can request any information you wish to have about Switzerland by e-mail - be it on tourism, trade, railway timetables, schools, maps, or yellow pages, to name a few. Within a short time, you can expect an e-mail in reply.

A vast amount of information is now available to us all - it is just a matter of being able to access it. No one is "too old" to learn how to use a computer, and a lot of help is available for beginners - have a go !!

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs recently began producing a free booklet called

Publication received from Swiss Embassy, Wellington Media Release

Inkweed (Publishers) are planning a book of short-fiction and poetry that reflects the experiences of immigrants to New Zealand. We would like contributions from refugees and others who have migrated to New Zealand from all parts of the world. The stories and poems should be in English but translations are most welcome.

The only stipulation is that short stories and poems are written by those who have immigrated to New Zealand or their immediate family.

To be accepted for publication the stories and poems should reflect their experiences in New Zealand.

Please send manuscripts or write for further information to:

Lindsay Forbes, Inkweed, 21 Pikarere Street, Titahi Bay;

Tel/Fax: (04) 236 0209; inkweed@ethos.co.nz

"Schweiz Global". This 18-page publication, "Switzerland in the World", is now also available in English. It contains some really interesting articles about Swiss life and culture, along with a number of really good colour pictures. I have a few copies available here, and if anyone is interested in subscribing to this publication (remember, it's absolutely free!), please let me know (including which language) by mid September. I will then send a list of subscribers to Switzerland.

In the last *Helvetia*, "Society-only" members also received a subscription renewal form. The response was really good, and I'd like to thank members for sending sub payments so promptly, and thank you for all the friendly and positive comments we received - that makes all the work worthwhile. For those members yet to pay, I look forward to hearing from you shortly. Your support of our Swiss Society is much appreciated.

Congratulations to all the medal winners for 2001 - it's good to see that participation was once again quite high, especially in the Hamilton and Taranaki Clubs. Beatrice.



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