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competence of their Police forces may be jeopardised. The Social Democrats also see a direct conflict with Bank secrecy laws. And to make matters even worse - shooters; many politicians; and not least Federal Councillor Samuel Schmid (Defence Dept.) - are very worried that the "Schengen Regime" will not allow members of the armed forces to take home their personal weapons and ammunition.

Samuel Schmid Investigates

Initial inquiries by the Justice Department foresaw no problems and consequently gave the green light. However, the General Secretary of the Defence Department paints a different picture and wants the question of whether or not weapons can be taken home, a basic tenet of Switzerland's "Malitia" (Miliz Armee), looked into more deeply. Whether or not a special exemption in this case can be negotiated with the EU has at this point not yet been discussed. But a spokesperson from the Defence Department has said that contrary to Swiss Law, Article 78 of the "Schengen Accord" forbids all trade in firearms and ownership thereof, including military type weapons and ammunition.

Metzler under Severe Pressure

The Liberal Democrat's caucus met recently to discuss this problem. At least two prominent members are now said to be considering moving a motion, while the Christian Democrats are depositing a relevant motion, putting the Minister of Justice, Ruth Metzler, under enormous pressure.

Switzerland's political mills process things very slowly, so I guess it will probably take quite some time before a solution, accord or concensus is likely to emerge.

Article provided by Heinz Leuenberger, Delegate for Swiss Abroad.

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Member's Profile

Chris and Nicole Leuthold Art of Cheese Café, Puhoi

Chris and I came to New Zealand in December 1988 on our honeymoon. We went to an English school in Auckland where one of the teachers knew about a cheese factory in Puhoi and so we arranged to go to Puhoi for a Sunday trip. The owner of Puhoi Valley Cheese was very interested in Chris; he was looking for a qualified Cheesemaker to run his production site.

We agreed to stay for one year. I worked in the packing site and Chris in production.

One year went by and we decided to stay just a little longer. And we are here still.

In 1997 we felt like a bit of a change and we tossed up whether we should go back to Switzerland or see if we could start our own cheese factory in New Zealand.

That was the time when The Art of Cheese was created and we started to manufacture in our own business in October 1997. The Café was built in 1999.

Chris is in charge of the cheese factory. We produce about 110 tonnes of Camembert, Brie and five Blue cheeses plus Mascarpone and Crème Fraîche per year. We contract manufacture for Puhoi Valley cheese, so our product is branded under Royale Tasman, Ornelle, Bouton d'Or or the new Puhoi brand.

In the cafe we are aiming to be an educational place for all sorts of different cheeses.

We have a lot of school groups that come and see the cheese being made. We sell a lot of dishes based on cheese and in general promote ourselves as a family friendly hideaway in Puhoi.

People that come here can watch a Video about the process of cheesemaking, or just relax on our deck overlooking the two ponds.

Our children Thomas, 6, and Nina, 4, also enjoy helping their dad in the factory.

Chris and I are both from Riffenmatt near Bern. Chris is a qualified master Cheesemaker and I was trained as a pastry cook.

We both love New Zealand and feel very privileged to call such a great country our home.

(The Art of Cheese Café can be reached from the SH1 to Whangarei, about 10 minutes after the Orewa end of the motorway, past Waiwera, turn off to Puhoi and follow the sign.)

Thankyou Trudi Fill for this article. - (colour photo of Auckland Swiss Club at the occasion of 'Mystery Tour-2000' at "Art of Cheese Café" on page 16).

Congratulations
to Editing Team Member

Karl Waldvogel

celebrating his 75th birthday
on October 1st. 2001
and 50 years of life
in New Zealand

With best wishes from the
Swiss Society, Editing Team,
and the
Hamilton Swiss Club

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