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News From Switzerland

Radio Eviva to Stay Landlermusik Station

Radio Eviva, Switzerland's well-known radio station with Swiss Folklore Music, was sold a few months ago to Radio Central, a private radio station in the Innerschwyz (Central Switzerland). Since the change of ownership, it has been rumoured that the folklore radio station could be shut down or that major changes could be made. They are, however, planning to keep Radio Eviva on the air. Radio Central had been looking to produce a second programme with mainly Swiss folklore music for quite some time, a plan that could be realised with the takeover of Radio Eviva. It appears that the financial situation of Radio Eviva was far worse than estimated. Radio Central wants to develop Radio Eviva into a professionally operated radio station, so that it becomes interesting to advertisers. For the radio station to survive income from advertising or from other sources is a must. Radio Central is demanding from federal authorities, that the radio station be assigned a regular FM frequency. So far, Radio Eviva is available on cable, by satellite and on the internet (www.eviva.ch).

Novartis is courting Roche

Swiss pharmaceutical giant Novartis is continuing to court its Swiss competitor Roche.

Daniel Vasella, CEO of Novartis, is satisfied that a merger between the two companies would be beneficial for Switzerland, the business location Basle and the shareholders.

Novartis recently bought additional shares of Roche. It now owns 32.70% of its rival.

Apparently Roche is not interested in

a merger with Novartis and wishes to expand on its own.

CEO Daniel Vasella is rumoured to receive a salary of 20 million Swiss francs, of which 2.9 million Swiss francs is paid in cash!

New Swiss Drivers' Licences

Those of you who ever had a Swiss driver's licence know how large the licence is. It only fits into the average wallet if it is folded several times. These times are soon going to be over. The new Swiss driver's licence, to be introduced this spring, will be the size of a credit card (like our current NZ ones). Apparently the new licence has a pink background colour and is designed to look similar to the ones of the countries of the European Union. The licence contains the personal information as well as the vehicle categories the owner of the licence is allowed to drive (categories have been altered so they are the same as the ones of the European Union). The security features include colour effects, micro print and the hologram "CH". Drivers' addresses will no longer show on the licence. The old drivers' licences will remain valid, so don't rush to get a new one!

Powwow and Movenpick Glace are now Nestle

Shopping sprees galore for Nestle! For 820 million Swiss francs it bought the Powwow Group, the European bottled water business of Huchison Whampoa (a company domiciled in Hong Kong). The Powwow Group sells bottled water in seven European countries. Nestle already owns several companies in the water business, such as Nestle Waters in America and Perrier, Sanpelegrino and Vittel in Europe. Nestle estimates that the bottled water industry will grow

15% to 20% per year! Nestle is now the world's biggest supplier of mineral and drinking water.

Nestle has also purchased the ice cream business of Swiss company Movenpick. Nestle is now one of the largest ice cream producers of the world, owning several brands.

Apparently the purchase price was low, as Movenpick needed the cash.

The Swiss love new cars

Switzerland's approximately 7 million residents have bought 295,109 new passenger cars in 2002! This is a decrease of 7% compared to 2001, which was one of the top years.

The Swiss still like the German cars, with Volkswagen leading the figures on 32,716 cars sold, followed by 29,384 Opel, 18,927 Renault, 18,064 Audi and 17,590 Toyota. 46% of all new cars sold were German cars. A big success has been the Mini Cooper, produced by BMW.

Religion changes

For years the two major churches, the Protestant Church and Roman-Catholic Church, have lost members. 41.80% of Swiss residents belong to the Roman-Catholic Church and 33.00% to the Protestant Church, according to the federal office for statistics.

Statisticians say that these two churches have lost 363,000 members since 1990. Other religious communities such as Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism have grown - from 0.70% in 1970 to approximately 7.10%. A total of 11.10% of the Swiss residents said that they were not affiliated with any religion. These are about 300,000 people more than in 1990. These figures are from the federal census of 2000.

Achievement

- Achievement ... a time for looking back with pride, for looking ahead with joy.
 - To climb a mountain, you must start from the base camp.
 - To reach great heights be prepared to start from the bottom.
 - Don't allow past experiences to retard future achievements.
- The greatest achievements come from the biggest challenges.
 - Those who do not hope to achieve have already lost.
 - People who begin many things often finish few.
- It's amazing what you can achieve if you believe you can do it.
- You can achieve anything you want - if you help enough people get what they want.
- People have a basic need to be wanted - they want to contribute and feel useful. Help them to achieve.
- People may doubt what you say, but they will always believe what you do.