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Editorial

My gosh!! We are fast approaching Christmas Day already, again!!! It seems to me as if I just left the last one behind me six months ago! It seems like the years are getting shorter! But of course, that cannot be! So, the other, less palatable fact, must be true! When one gets old in years, those very same years seem to inexplicably get shorter!!! Oh well, as long as one can still walk around on one's own legs and the mind is fully aware what the legs are doing, one has no reason to complain about the years, no matter whether they appear to be getting shorter or longer!!!

Many of our members will also be celebrating a birthday during the Christmas month. To all these, we wish you a very happy birthday! To all of these members, December will

hopefully bring a double dose of joy as they celebrate with family and friends the anniversary of both their own birth and that of the Christ Child at Yuletide. May you all have a very joyous month!

Sadly, there is so much murder and mayhem, civil-war and terrorism, in so many parts of the world today, that it makes one appreciate what a beautiful and reasonably peaceful homeland we are privileged to have here in New Zealand! Oh yes, we have our share of criminals and crime, but nothing our vigilant police force hasn't been able to handle ... so far! Let's all do our best to keep our beloved "Kiwiland" just so!!!

Now, on a completely different note! Well, I've done it!! I have registered myself, through the embassy, as a Swiss-abroad voter, in the 'Home'

Gemeinde (community) of my father and probably at least 25 generations of my ancestors before him, from my family-information I have been able to find out so far. I have already voted the first time in the latest Federal referendum! I must say, I found it very easy to comprehend what the two issues were about, on which we were asked to vote. The information pamphlet with the voting papers was printed in concise, easy to understand language.

Now, I have an important question for all readers of 'Helvetia' who still have Swiss citizenship, but were not registered as a voter in Switzerland. Have you registered yourself during the last year? If not, why not do it in the next few months? Would all of you concerned please again read my editorial of exactly twelve months ago, Dec 2004. On July 1, 1992, National Councillor Dr Georg Stucky filed a motion in parliament that would grant Swiss citizens living abroad, the right to vote in Federal matters. I believe, after a short debate, this was passed into law the same day!!

Dr Stucky is not a Swiss MP anymore. For several years now, he has been president of the Organisation of Swiss Abroad (OSA). Let me remind you of some of his wise writings. Quote: "As the Swiss Abroad, you are an important political force. You are not second-class citizens! Your active participation in national decision-making is essential. By joining in votes in Switzerland you are looking after your own interests. Every vote counts and you must give our country the benefit of the experience you have gained outside our borders. So please do take this opportunity to exercise your political rights from now on." Unquote! Even my best efforts could not 'trump' Dr Stucky's wise words above.

On behalf of our editing team and our loyal 'monthly packers', I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

Cheerio from Paul.

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WE HAVE A NEW AMBASSADOR!

The Swiss Society of New Zealand wishes to extend a hearty welcome to Ambassador Beat Nobs and his family, to New Zealand.