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It's that time of the year again when migratory birds leave for warmer lands – and when many New Zealand Swiss leave for Switzerland, to visit friends and family, to go to a brother's or friend's wedding, to spend time with grandchildren, to celebrate a sister's or parent's special birthday or just to shorten the New Zealand winter. Some lucky people evade winter altogether and have an endless row of summers, New Zealand summers alternating with Swiss summers! I look forward to the stories they will tell when they come back, and to postcards they might send, and of course to Carolyn's Boden-see News.

To the small hardy Swiss community that winters in New Zealand, I say: Make the most of it. Invite friends – Swiss and New Zealanders – to our many winter dishes, Fondue, Raclette (my favourite one, as even I manage to boil potatoes in their jackets!), Sauerkraut, Rotkraut with Chnöpfl, Potato/Leek Gratin... I'm sure you can think of many more. In these times of rising food prices, old fashioned, traditional "home made" food does not only taste good, it is also still affordable, and will be much appreciated by friends and family.

After the shortest day in June the days become longer again. It takes a while for us to notice, but at least we know that theoretically, the worst is over (although the worst, the coldest days, are still ahead of us).

Some people celebrate Christmas in June. I don't; to me Christmas is not transferable, even though I enjoyed Christmas in winter, in Switzerland, more than Christmas in New Zealand summer. Why not celebrate Winter Solstice? It is a tradition that goes further back even than Christmas, and in the southern hemisphere we have the privilege of celebrating Winter Solstice and Christmas quite apart, each in its own right. So let's celebrate and light candles!

By the way: I'll go overseas, too, probably in June – but that's for the next editorial. *Trudi*



No doubt you are all packing your bags and preparing for the journey to Auckland, to attend this year's AGM hosted by the Auckland Swiss Club. A special thanks to our hosts as we know this is a big event to organise. A fun filled weekend with opportunities to meet new friends and rekindle friendships. Even so, be careful on your journey and remember it is better to arrive late, than not at all.

Recent international catastrophes have reinforced the importance of our emergency fund available to Swiss Society members. The amount of help required overseas, shows we also need to be prepared if a natural disaster happens here. We must remember New Zealand is prone to earthquakes, tsunamis and such. This emergency fund is a small amount, but could provide a little assistance for people in similar circumstances.

I'm looking forward to the event with my sympathetic ear and dancing shoes. But honestly, I try to take my job seriously.... so I hope to speak to as many people as possible.

Safe journeys to all

Uf Wiederluege
Roland

Swiss Society of New Zealand

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