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"It is important to destroy all these volunteers" - can you imagine my feelings when I read this? We are always short of volunteers, not only in the Swiss Clubs. The Citizens' Advice Bureau is staffed by volunteers. The Cats Protection League needs volunteers to feed the cats and clean their cages. Forest and Bird relies on volunteers to raise seedlings and do planting. The Department of Conservation has volunteers for their weeding and monitoring projects. Schools appeal to the community for volunteers to help in the classroom or with individual reading programmes. The Cancer Society is always advertising for volunteers to drive cancer patients to their treatment. I'm sure you could easily name another dozen organisations that rely on volunteers. Many if not all of us are involved to some degree in one or several voluntary organizations - so why would anyone advise us to destroy volunteers?

Well, the story began last year, when a friend gave me some Jerusalem artichokes from her garden. I thought it would be a good idea to grow them, so rather than cook them, I planted them in my garden, at various places - and forgot all about them. In due time plants appeared; they looked very much like sunflower plants. Sunflowers are flowers I'm particularly fond of, but they are difficult to grow in my garden; as they have shallow roots, they get blown over too easily. But this year I'd have sunflowers! They grew, and they grew - but it was all leaves and no flowers. Maybe they weren't sunflowers after all? When I couldn't stand the uncertainty any longer, I pulled one out, and sure enough: no sunflower roots, but small tubers: Jerusalem artichokes in the making! So I gave up sunflower hopes and nourished artichoke hopes.

The other day I decided it was time to harvest them, and I pulled them all out and collected the tubers I found, quite a good harvest, enough to invite friends

for an artichoke meal. To be sure I'd do it right, I looked "Jerusalem artichoke" up in the internet and found recipes, and all sorts of information: They are related to sunflowers, some va-



rieties do have small sunflower-like flowers; the tubers contain a special type of carbohydrate diabetics can eat without problems; they have nothing to do neither with Jerusalem nor with arti-

chokes: The Jerusalem bit of their name comes from Italian "girasole" and the artichoke bit from an Arabic word I forgot.

And then they warned that all the tubers that are not harvested will turn into next year's plants and produce next year's crop - and therefore "it is important to destroy all these volunteer plants". I guess that is sound advice if you grow vegetables commercially. But needless to say I shall not try and find all the forgotten volunteers, on the contrary: I look forward to having more volunteers growing in my garden, have more tubers next year. Wouldn't it be great if we could grow volunteers in clubs and associations just as easily?

Inde

Swiss Society of New Zealand Inc.

Patron	Ambassador Dr Beat Nobs
President	Roland Schütz, 35 East Street, Petone, Lower Hutt 5012 Ph h 04 568 6772, w 04 568 5737. Email: moehau2@iconz.co.nz
Vice President	Max Fuhrer, 8 Curacao Place, Grenada Village, Johnsonville, Wellington 6037. Ph 04 478 0003.
Secretary/Editor	Trudi Brühlmann, 401 Marine Drive, Mahina Bay, Eastbourne, Lower Hutt 5013. Ph 04 562 8019. Email: bruhlmann@xtra.co.nz
Treasurer	Heidi Amelung, 32 Hinau Street, Eastbourne, Lower Hutt 5013 Ph 04 562 7568. Email: gravure@xtra.co.nz
Riflemaster	Mark Kiser, 140 Pukengahu Rd, RD 23, Stratford. Ph 06 762 2922

Delegates to the Swiss Abroad Conference in Switzerland

Delegate	Heinz Leuenberger, 33 Russell Terrace, Putaruru. Ph 07 883 8537. Email: heileun@clear.net.nz
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Secretaries of the Swiss Clubs

Auckland	Heidi Wilson, 53 Rothesay Bay Road, Rothesay Bay, Auckland. Ph 09 478 9751. Email: heidi.wilson@hotmail.com
Hamilton	Anita Zuber, PO Box 24061, Hamilton 3253 Ph 07 856 2414, mob ph 027 498 5170. Email: zuber@xtra.co.nz
Taranaki	Marianne Drummond, 508 Salisbury Road, RD 24, Stratford. Ph 06 7628 757. Email: littleacres@xtra.co.nz
Wellington	Isabelle Richter, 121B Brougham Street, Mt Victoria, Wellington. Ph h 04 384 7373, w 04 471 1594. Email: partymonster@gmx.net
Embassy of Switzerland	Level 12, Maritime Towers, 10 Customhouse Quay, Wellington 6140. PO Box 25004, Wellington 6146. Ph 04 472 1593, Fax 04 499 6302. Email: wel.vertretung@eda.admin.ch Website: www.eda.admin.ch/wellington
Consulate of Switzerland	Peter Deutsche, PO Box 302239, North Harbour, North Shore City 0751. Ph 09 366 0403. Email: auckland@honorarvertretung.ch