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Christmas is at our doorsteps - a busy time! When do you start baking the traditional Christmas biscuits? I don't want to have Chräbeli still at Easter, but on the other hand, I don't want to run out of Mailänderli half a week before Christmas, either. The obvious solution would be to bake all the Christmas biscuits now, at the beginning of December, and bake another lot once they are eaten; I might do that. And what about the Stollen? No, I only make one lot of those, close to Christmas.

Have you sent your Christmas mail yet? Christmas is the time of the year to catch up with friends and family. I'm old-fashioned and like to send individual, handwritten Christmas cards - and just hope for the best that the recipients can read my handwriting. It has never been great, and it is deteriorating, I have been told.

And then the question of presents. The postage for sending presents overseas is often more than the value of the present. New Zealand Post might need a helping hand, but does it have to be so expensive?

A while ago I found the solution that works just fine for me: For my sister in Switzerland I bought a coffee plant, and one for her husband, since they both drink a lot of coffee. For my friend Isabel I bought some ducks to add to the ones she already has. Another friend whose garden could do with some TLC will get a wheelbarrow. The cutest gift, however, is for a friend here: She'll get a woolly lamb. Wrapping these presents is no problem, and New Zealand Post only gets the \$2.30 it gets anyway (because I'm late with my cards).

You might wonder how my sister will grow coffee in Swiss snow. Well, she won't. The coffee plants will be planted in East Timor by a farmer there - and my sister can buy her coffee from him. And my friend will be able to continue enjoying his garden jungle. And the lamb will go to Papua New Guinea, and my friend does not have to look after it. And it is so easy - Oxfam (or Save the Children) does it for me. And instead of running after Christmas presents and spending a fortune on postage I can concentrate on writing Christmas cards and baking the next lot of Mailänderli!

*Merry Christmas and  
a Happy New Year*

*Inde*

Mini läbe Mitglider, es geit mir grad düre Chopf ob mer de no chöi e wiissi Wiehnacht fiire. I ha hüt Zobe sogar die ganzi Heizerei müesse i Gang bringe, damit i gmütlech cha bim Tisch hocke. So langsam wär's ou wider schön, we mer üser Vercheutige u Liide chönti los wärde.

My dear Compatriots, it's the time of the year when we look forward to have some relaxing time with friends and families. Hopefully we have a bit more time for each other. I could do with more time at the breakfast table. But then again: If I have more time I read something new and interesting - and the result is that I'm late again with everything else for the rest of the day.

I'm sure all Swiss Club Committees are planning their Christmas and New Year celebrations, and I know a lot of time and effort goes

into it. I ask all of you and your extended families to participate in these celebrations. For the younger family members it is a good experience to visit Samichlaus and Schmutzli in our Swiss Clubs; it is one way to keep our traditions alive.

My New Year's resolutions for 2010:

- The new roof for our Wellington club house is on target; we have started!!!
- For the rest: I am still struggling with last year's resolutions!

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

*Roland*

Glücklich hat es Gott geordnet,  
dass von der Zukunft  
die Gegenwart verdrängt wird,  
das Alte durch das Neue.

*Jeremias Gotthelf*

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