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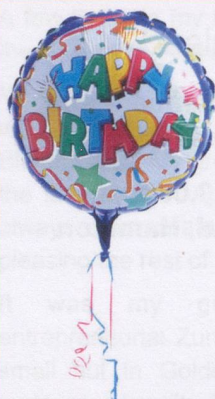
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The Swiss Society and Helvetia Team congratulate both Joseph Keiser and Hilda Iten most cordially on their 90th birthday: Joseph celebrated his birthday on 11 February and Hilda hers on 20 March. We also congratulate Nelly Steinemann, our fabulous ladies' choir mistress and Auckland club news editor on her 70th birthday, and Herbert Staeheli, the Hamilton Swiss club's President for over 35 years, on his 60th birthday.

We hope you all had a truly enjoyable day amidst family and friends, and wish you happiness and good health for the coming years. We thank you for the important contributions you have made to your clubs and the Swiss Society over the years. Without you, we would not be where we are today and would not have had half the fun! A Toast to you all!

Brief an die Mutter aus der Ferne

Wenn ich nur ein Vöglein wär',
käm' ich zu dir geflogen,
über Tal und Berge her
mit dem Wind gezogen!

Brächte selber meinen Gruss
Unter Lust und Scherzen,
gäbe dir den schönsten Kuss,
froh an deinem Herzen.

Leider soll's nicht also sein.

Hier, in weiter Ferne,
richt' ich meinen Blick allein
Auf zum Herrn der Sterne.

Kindlich flehe ich ihn an
Um sein treues Walten,
mög' er dich auf deiner Bahn
lange noch erhalten!

Dir gehört mein Herz allein,
dir soll's ewig schlagen! -
Oh, wie herrlich müsst' es sein,
könnt' ich's dir selber sagen.

Über Tal und Berge her
mit dem Wind gezogen –
wenn ich nur ein Vöglein wär',
käm' ich zu dir geflogen!

From the 19th Century

Contributed by Edith Hess



Zum Muttertag

(Source: www.upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9b/Herztorte_zum_Muttertag.jpg; Photo Josef Türk Jun.)

Hilde Iten



Born in 1923 on a little farm near Lucerne as the eldest of seven girls, Hilde has always looked after people. She made a career in hospitality.

★ working in hotels and restaurants in
★ Switzerland before going to England
★ on her big OE in the early 50s. She
★ wanted an adventure and didn't stop
★ when she got there, continuing on her
★ travels to Australia. Hilde landed in
★ Sydney, then went on to Adelaide,
★ where she bumped into a handsome
★ Swiss man called Hans. They married
★ and came to Auckland on their
★ honeymoon in 1960, with the
★ intention of staying if they liked
★ it...and they did.

★ When they first arrived they boarded
★ in Arch Hill until they could find work
★ and save up for a house. She and
★ Hans moved into their first home in
★ Mt Eden while Hilde was pregnant
★ with their first child, Andrew and had
★ Lillian three years later. Their son
★ Andrew remembers hearing how
★ when they first arrived, they were told
★ not to bother with the Swiss Club
★ because all it entailed was men
★ playing cards and women knitting!

★ However, a chance encounter with
★ the Swiss Club president of the time
★ in the local barber shop persuaded
★ them to see for themselves and Hilde
★ and Hans have been stalwart
★ members of the club ever since.

Until recently, Hilde has always helped in the background ensuring people are welcome and well fed, often found with her hands in the sink doing the dishes! Hilde is well-known for her generosity of spirit as well as her baking, particularly her apple strudel. She has become a keen Jass player, and there's always a pack of cards near, in case there's an opportunity to have a game or two.

Hilde's known for her big heart - for decades there's been a steady stream of visitors turning up on her doorstep, knowing there's a warm welcome for them, no matter how distant the connection. One couple visiting New Zealand needed witnesses for their wedding, Hilde and Hans stepped in, and they have been firm friends ever since. Her hospitality is legendary, with plenty of home-made baking to share along with a cup of coffee and the latest news.

Hilde has had a life-long interest in natural remedies and herbs, long before it was fashionable, and is always happy to share her findings with others and keep exploring new ideas. She is also a keen gardener and amateur winemaker - using the fruits from her garden.

Ties with Switzerland have remained strong - until recently she's made regular visits to see her sisters and old friends, with the added incentive of seeing her daughter Lillian, who has lived in Switzerland for the last 25 years.

Happy 90th birthday Hilde, wishing you many happy returns!

By Andrew and Lillian Iten