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From the President/Editor

Dear Helvetia Readers and Swiss Society Members,

It is the shortest day today and I am all snuggled up in fleece and blanket as I type and I'm longing for the longer, sunnier days... hopefully by the time you read this it will be getting warmer and spring will be just around the corner. There's hope...!

The highlight of the year for the Swiss Society was no doubt the AGM which was held on 2nd June in Hamilton. With much anticipation Susie, Marcel and I arrived at the Matangi Hall just in time for the Happy Hour on Saturday night. It's all about priorities, right? It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces and I especially enjoyed meeting lots of new people – I can't promise you that I'll still remember all your names at the next AGM but I'll do my best.

The biggest thank you goes to the Hamilton Club who organised a lovely weekend for us all and especially to the ladies and gents of the cooking team! You guys did a tremendous job putting together all those meals. Those that didn't make it to the AGM, you definitely missed out: You should have seen the dessert buffet! A smorgasbord of deliciousness – "die Qual der Wahl" as we say back home. Thank you Herbert for the personal delivery of the 'Japonais' – my all-time favourite always brings back memories of the hours spent in my dad's bakery.

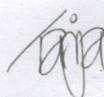
Congratulations to Hamilton for winning the final of the Cowbell competition – it was a fair and square win against Taranaki. Well done Hamilton, you truly deserve the large cowbell! The AGM itself was conducted without any major glitches (apart from the coffee spilled over my white top and the flower vase I kicked over – must have been the 'Kafi-Schnapps'...). Very interesting were the Club reports that the Presidents of the Auckland, Hamilton, Taranaki and Wellington clubs presented and nice to hear you all had such a successful year with well attended Swiss events. On behalf of the Swiss Society of New Zealand I would like to welcome all new committee members who joined the various clubs recently. Also a huge thank you to those who have resigned and left a committee, your work was outstanding! Thank you very much for all your support and commitment.

On that note I would like to welcome Nelly Steinemann from Auckland who was voted into the Swiss Society Committee to be the new Secretary. It's nice to have you on board, Nelly.

A special thank you goes to the Patron of the Swiss Society, Marion Weichelt Krupski, who flew up from Wellington to be with us for the evening function. The Ambassador delivered a very interesting speech about her duties and responsibilities at the Embassy. A lesson learnt for those of us who weren't aware of all the diplomatic relations that are involved in an ambassadorial position. I wish you all a safe and warm winter and for those that hit the slopes: break a leg!

Liebi Grüessli,

Tanja Latham-Zurbrugg



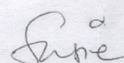
Dear Helvetia Readers,

Tanja has done an excellent job reporting on the AGM and our warm welcome by the Hamilton Club, and I join her in a big thank you to Hamilton.

This issue marks the beginning of our second year of Helvetia production. On this occasion, we finally deliver on the promise to introduce the Helvetia Team (see page 12). This is just the core team, and we acknowledge all the other contributors who have supported the Helvetia through the last year.

In this issue, we also commence the first in what we hope will be an ongoing series of Swiss-New Zealand life histories - starting off with Hans Fitzi. What a fascinating life! We hope to extend this project to other clubs over time, so watch this space.

I wish you all most enjoyable 1st August celebrations.



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