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President's Report on the AGM

Grüessech, Bienvenu, Benvenuti & Allegra

The drive up to the Dawson Falls Mountain Lodge on Mount Taranaki was even more stunning than I imagined it to be. People say that it's a very special place, but when you drive up that green, moss covered road, with arches of trees and branches majestically protecting the path, you really feel like you are in a picture book. The three days we spent in Taranaki couldn't have been more brilliant, with stunning blue skies and Mount Taranaki showing its best side with a beautiful snowy peak.

Staying at the Dawson Falls Lodge really was very special with its Swiss style suites and decor – it brought back memories from back home. There were 14 Swiss combined from the Auckland and Hamilton clubs staying at the Lodge and we had a great time there! Lots of fun and laughter already at the breakfast table! Thanks to our hosts Sera and Markus who made us feel at home.

It was Queen's Birthday weekend and we all travelled to Kaponga to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Society of New Zealand. It started off on Saturday evening with a delicious supper and dessert and a very warm welcome by everyone of the Taranaki Swiss club. It was wonderful to meet so many new and old friends again from all around the North Island.

Sunday morning was show place of the fierce cowbell competition. This year we again had a final between Hamilton and Taranaki - only this time Taranaki cleaned up and won the huge cowbell! Congratulations to the Taranaki Swiss club, you certainly deserved to win especially since you hosted such an amazing weekend for all of us!

After a delicious lunch it was time for the AGM. What can I say, it's not my cup of tea to speak in front of people and I'm glad another one is under my belt... It was a pleasant meeting though and I would like to thank everyone who presented a report during the AGM. I would like to specially thank the Swiss Society Committee members who were elected again. We are very lucky to have such a dedicated team which consists of Marcel Ruedi as Vice President, Nelly Steinemann as Secretary, Susie Wood as Editor, Carmen Fitz-Gorden as Treasurer, Ernst Lanz as Riflemaster and yours truly as President.

After some refreshments, our patron,



the Ambassador of Switzerland Marion Weichert-Krupski presented an informative farewell speech. We wish her and her family only the best for her next ambassadorial post in Germany.

Our Helvetia magazine reached another milestone this year and we celebrated its 80th Anniversary with a wine and cheese Happy Hour sponsored by the Swiss Society. The Swiss Bakery in Milford, Auckland, baked us a special party bread for the occasion, which was admired by all. The current Helvetia wouldn't be what it is without our amazing and dedicated team. I would like to thank Susie Wood, Alexandra Beskid-Jung, Trudi Fill-Weidmann, Nelly Steinemann, Adrian Blaser and Family, Edith Hess, Melissa Lanz, Ursula Nixon, Henry Werffeli, the Secretaries of the Swiss clubs, the Embassy in Wellington and Peter Ehrler, delegate of the Swiss Abroad who all contribute articles and reports on a regular basis to make such an interesting Helvetia. I also thank Trudi Bruehlmann and Simon Penny for their help in proofing the Helvetia.

The lambs had been turning outside in the rotisserie all afternoon and reached their perfection in time for dinner - another amazing meal that the Taranaki Swiss club provided for us all! Dinner was a real treat and so was the entertainment: singing, yodelling, alphorn playing and of course the accordions that played tirelessly for hours on end. The festivities lasted long into the night with lots of chatting and laughing, lots

of dancing and quite a few jass games. We were absolutely spoilt all weekend by the hospitality of the Taranaki Swiss Club. I would like to extend a huge thank you to them all, especially to Othmar and Marlies, Marianne, Adrian and their boys as well as everyone that worked away in the kitchen and everywhere else to make us feel so welcome. You all put an endless amount of work into it to make us have such an amazing weekend! Thank you very much for everything – we really had a special time in Taranaki!

Yours,

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