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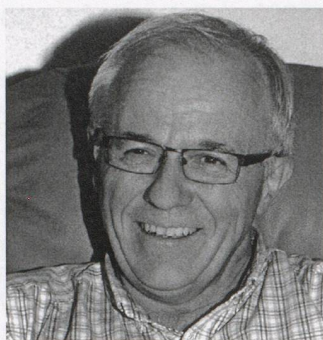
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## Editorial Team Hamilton



**Hans Vetsch**  
President Swiss Society

Born in Switzerland, I grew up on a typical Swiss mountain farm together with my brothers and sister. After completion of my education, I joined Buehler Brothers in Uzwil as an apprentice engineer and soon after completion of this program, I ended up working as project engineer on overseas projects. It was in 1977 that I was offered a three year contract as project manager at Timaru Milling Company in New Zealand. Vreni, my then fiancée, was not that impressed at first, but we decided to go for this adventure and married just before we left. Three years in Timaru just flew past and after a holiday in Switzerland, I accepted the factory manager's job at Timaru Milling Company staying on for another 9 years. Our two children were born down there in the early 80's.

In 1988 we transferred to Oamaru where I was manager of the Regina Confectionery Plant and finally in 1994 we shifted to Hamilton. Both our children and our newly born grandson also live here in Hamilton. Verena and I enjoy travelling, outdoor activities, gardening and beach life. My job as manager at Waikato Valley Chocolate still occupies me pretty much, but the Helvetia duties may take over soon!



**Anna Blattler**  
Vice President Swiss Society

My husband and I, and our 2 sons, were based in Kanton Thurgau on a 1000 sqm lifestyle block, which became too small for our plans of grazing sheep

and breeding bees. So, in 1985 in our mid-twenties, we immigrated to New Zealand. A close relative, Robi Blattler, was dry stock farming near Te Aroha at the time and provided shelter for us during the initial 3 months until we found our own feet. We were both "Swiss trained" laboratory technicians and found a lab job in the local dairy factory at Waitoa. I was fortunate to receive grants from the NZ Dairy Board to further my studies and ended up with a Doctorate in Science from the University of Waikato. In 1990 we bought the Te Aroha Holiday Park. In 1992 my, by-then, ex-husband and boys returned to Switzerland and I became sole trader of the Holiday Park. Life now revolves around hosting Kiwis and other guests from all over the world. A new relationship with a local sheep farmer resulted in our Kiwi daughter. Since 2012 I live with a Dutch dairy farmer who helps me out at the Holiday Park. We also took up sailing small centre-board dinghies which enables us to enjoy very beautiful harbours in New Zealand, and as members of the Hamilton Yacht club we sail regularly on Lake Rotorua. We both play cards; I learnt the Dutch Klaven Jass and he learnt the Swiss Schieber. My two sons are both married and live in Switzerland and I have 3 grandchildren whom I visit at least once a year. I have recently been involved in a Swiss documentary called "Langziit."



**Anita Zuber**  
Secretary Swiss Society

I was born in Switzerland in Canton Thurgau and my family immigrated to New Zealand via ship and arrived in Wellington in December 1957. I was the age of two and naturally can't remember the journey but do have memories of my pre-school years in Hamilton where I have spent most of my life.

As a 16 ½ year old, my parents took me, along with my two younger sisters for a 6 week trip to Switzerland. During a two day visit to Berne for the Auslandschweizerkongress I met my husband Walter at the Kursaal where

he asked me for a dance. We saw each other one more time when he visited us in Dussnang (my parent's birthplace) and then we corresponded for a year. In August 1973 Walter came to New Zealand for a 6 month visit. We both returned to Switzerland early 1974 and got married in January 1975. We left for NZ in our VW Kombi van in March, travelling via the East to Nepal and India and shipped the vehicle from Sri Lanka to Auckland, while we flew the rest. We have lived in NZ ever since and have two daughters in their mid-thirties. The younger one lives in Switzerland together with her Swiss partner and their 5 year old son. Our other daughter lives in Hamilton. We owned a Panelbeating and Carpainting business for 29 years and now spend a lot of our free time in Whitianga. I have been on the Hamilton Swiss Club committee most of my adult life. My other interests include tennis, walking, gardening and biking. We now share a house with my parents, Joe and Helen Staheli.



**Heidi Wehrle**  
Editor

In 1961 my Mum and Dad, Joseph and Alice Arnold, along with us 6 children (eventually to be 7 with a kiwi addition!) left their dairy farm in The Rengg, near Alpnachstad, Canton Obwalden, in search of a better farming life. A few years later they purchased their NZ farm in Tahuna, Waikato. In 1972, at the tender age of 18 ½ (now you know how old I am) I married Richard Wehrle, a Swiss cheese-maker turned dairy farmer who had arrived in NZ in 1966. During our 30 years as dairy farmers we raised 3 children and I multi-tasked by working 3 part time jobs within LIC as an artificial breeding technician, a sales representative and travelling secretary while also, amongst other things, officiating at weddings as a Marriage Celebrant. It was not unusual for me to spend Saturday mornings dressed in overalls inseminating cows, which entailed putting my left arm up



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cows' rear ends, and then in afternoons officiating at a wedding wearing a liberal amount of Kölnisch Wasser 4711 on said arm, as well as a smart outfit and high heels! Richard and I shared a great busy farming life. We now live near Lake Karapiro enjoying retirement. We love travelling, reading, visits from friends, family, and 4 grandchildren and I do volunteer work for Lions' Club of Cambridge.



**Sandrine Smith**  
Treasurer

I grew up in Bassecourt (Jura) and the call of the outside world started when I was a teenager and I had my first taste of living abroad in Munich as an au-Pair. I came back to become a chiropodist and before the end of my medical exams, I had successfully passed the tests to enter the diplomatic corps. I received my chiropodist diploma in Lausanne on Friday and the following Monday I started my new career in Bern. I was posted in Düsseldorf, Paris, a few weeks in Kiev and in Washington DC. While in Washington DC, I started playing volleyball again. This is where I met Mark. I also became a skydiver and a single engine airplane pilot. Mark and I got engaged on the Gornergrat, married six months later in Bassecourt and had a second party later on the other side of the Atlantic. In the new millenium we welcomed a daughter and a son who are now wonderful teenagers. We then decided to move to New Zealand. After selling everything, we embarked on our new adventure on the 1st of August 2007. We stayed a few months in Auckland before moving to Hamilton where we have lived ever since. I work as an Operations Manager and am also a Nordic Walking Instructor. I have been teaching Nordic Walking in the Waikato since 2008. In my free time, I hike, go to the movies and volunteer. When I saw that the Swiss Club in Hamilton was looking for help with the Helvetia, I thought it was my chance to help as a Treasurer and my chance to add a little touch of Romandie in the magazine.



**Manuela Epp**  
Riflemaster

I was born and raised in Kerns, Obwalden Central Switzerland. I grew up on a dairy farm called Dietelmoos, where I lived a wonderful childhood, together with my three older siblings. I always loved animals, which is probably also a reason why I do what I do today. After finishing school I took up and completed an apprenticeship in a butchery/shop (Metzger Veredelung). I would have never thought of leaving Switzerland for good, and if someone asked me, I'd say never ever. Lesson learned never say never!!!!

I came to New Zealand in 2007 together with my boyfriend Bruno Epp. We found a job working for a New Zealand family on a dairy farm. The original plan was to stay for about one year but then we loved it so much here that we decided to stay for good in New Zealand. In 2012 Bruno and I went back to Switzerland for five weeks to get married. It was important for us to celebrate this special day with our family members.

We have three lovely children - Louy 5, Ben 3, and Ronja 2 years of age. The first of June is when farmers move to new properties as either sharemilkers or owners. In 2016 we purchased our first farm and on 1st of June, 2016, we moved onto it and we are looking forward to our big new adventure on our own 72ha dairy farm, at Karapiro Cambridge. Apart from my kids and husband, I love working on the farm with the animals, baking, cooking, sports and socialising with friends. We really appreciate the Swiss club, because of its lovely members, social activities and a time to experience, with our children, a bit of Swiss culture, which is very important to us.

Are you interested in the electronic version of the Helvetia?  
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anita.zuber@swiss.org.nz.

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