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Word from President, Vice-President and Editor

Dear Readers,

In this issue, as promised, we introduce the rest of our team and recap on some objectives and rules of the Swiss Society and the Schnyder von Wartensee Foundation.

A new topic to many will be the letter from the "Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad." We also touch on the topic of Tourism, the Olympics and meet an interesting character: Haensli.

For me, personally, this issue has also been a nostalgic journey. The front-page visit to Prattigau and Gabi Burch's article transported me to The Rengg, Alpnach, my childhood home in Switzerland, where I can still hear the cowbells of my Dad's 6 cows as they grazed in the "Weid" (field).

Then I am off to my parents' NZ farm at Tahuna, near Morrinsville where, in my mind's eye, I see my youthful self and my brothers lounging on the floor watching Charlie Chaplin cavort across our black and white Phillips TV screen.

Hardly has the walking stick twirler left the recesses of my mind when I find myself reminiscing about our early married years as I read the Swiss Chalet article. Richard and I spent many evenings in the companionship of Swiss and kiwi friends at this venue which promised and delivered a fantastic experience and a cosy dining atmosphere. We also retain fond memories of our first Swiss Card evenings held there.

And then there is Schabziger which brings me back to the present. My nose still rebels at the "sweaty sock" smell of the cheese which my husband grades as one of our pantry's "must haves". Perhaps Brigitte, who tested and compiled the recipe, will make him a Schabziger Pie one day.

In the Club News we are delighted to add a few words from our Swiss community in Otago as well as read about the four club news reports of past and future events. It has been a busy year for both Hamilton and Auckland Clubs who celebrated their 60th birthdays !!!

To the team and the club secretaries, a big 'thank you" for your help in bringing our second issue to fruition.

Now, our dear readers, read on and see where you will be transported.

Regards to all



Dear Society Members

A big thank you for the very positive feedback we received via email, phone and in person. It's nice to get any feedback but when it's positive it becomes a bit special. Another big thank you goes to the people who provided the content and put it all together.

You will see that we continued with our drive to share success stories of Swiss Immigrants. Bert Fluehler's story is very close to the heart of a large part of the Hamilton Swiss Community. I encourage you all to look around your friends and identify entrepreneurial or just special Swiss people whose story you think should be shared by the wider Swiss Community.

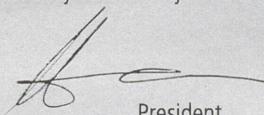
The other themes focus on Swiss Traditions and the Schabziger story revives great memories for me from the time I met my now wife, Vreni, some 45 years ago in Sool (im Ziegerschlitz). In this presentation you will also see a nice photo of a cheese making vat. I clearly remember my grandparents' pitch black kitchen/dining room with one of these vats hanging over a semi enclosed fireplace opposite the dining table. I think I can smell the smoke and see the half eaten piece of smoked speck hanging on a black hook as I write this report!!

As I write this I am also reminded of Dragon's song "Those were our young years " (the singer, Mark Hunter, was from Taumarunui)

Enough nostalgia- apart from the usual daily chores, I enjoyed an overload of sports events during the winter months, starting with the Tour de France which ran through Switzerland for about three days. I think it was worth watching just for the scenery but I enjoyed the energy and commitment the participants displayed day after day.

Olympic Games followed and what a treat that was for those with Sky. Twenty-four hour coverage was on hand of every event, not that I sat there all that time ; I picked out my favorites. I focused on the events with Kiwi participation and otherwise watched out for the Swiss team. Fantastic sportsmanship was displayed by most of them. All this fired me up again to train for the 160 km cycle challenge around Lake Taupo in November. (Take it easy on those cyclists on the road !!) I do hope the winter was positive for you too.

Happy springtime to you all and I hope you enjoy reading our latest Helvetia issue.



President

Swiss Society Objectives

by Anna Blaettler, Vice-President

The Society's main active role is to create a forum through this magazine for members to share their experiences thus helping each other to feel at home in a country far away from our families. According to the constitution, the Society's main objectives are to advance and promote cultural standards of Swiss origin in New Zealand and to step in when urgent financial help is required.

You are currently reading a bi-monthly magazine created by the Hamilton Swiss Club, which is one of four provincial branches of the Swiss Society, along with Wellington, Taranaki and Auckland. Hamilton has just started their four-year term in June this year. If you belong to one of these clubs and pay your annual subscription, the club will forward part of this fee (\$25) to the Society. Membership is open to all citizens of Swiss origin and their descendants. Persons who are of a friendly disposition towards Switzerland can also become members at the discretion of the club committees.

You also have the option of being a Swiss Society only member - this makes great sense if you live in an area outside any regionally organised club. Some regions choose to form a club without being connected to the society, i.e. Clubs in the South Island. The Society only fee is \$25 and is invoiced once a year - the year starting in April and usually invoiced following the AGM in June.

The Society's Helvetia magazine is a convenient medium to convey messages from the embassy to Swiss people in New Zealand.

One of the other roles is to oversee the Society Games, otherwise known as the Medal Competitions run within each club featuring traditional Swiss Sports such as Jassen (Cards) and Kegeln (Bowls) or Steinstossen (Rock throwing) and 50m Shooting. The Society Riflemaster collates these results, orders medals from Switzerland and distributes these to the clubs whereby 20% of participation will receive a medal. In 1969 an Interclub Competition was initiated by Arthur Mueller where the four clubs can compete for the Cowbell in these same disciplines. Each year Wellington competes against Taranaki and Hamilton against Auckland in the Semi-Final and then the Final is held in June at the Society AGM.

For more information contact the Secretary of any of the Swiss Clubs (see page 23) or check the website swiss.org.nz