

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 83 (2017)
Heft: [3]

Rubrik: President's report for the Swiss Society AGM 2017

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President's report for the Swiss Society AGM 2017



Dear friends

Here we are, at the end of our first year of running the Swiss Society and I look forward to sharing some highlights with you at the upcoming AGM.

Looking back at the first year, it has been a steep learning curve for us and I would like to start with a big "Thank you" to our small but very efficient and extremely dedicated team who made it all happen. A special "Thank you" has to go to Heidi Wehrle, our Editor, Anita Zuber, our Secretary and Sandrine Smith, our Treasurer and of course Peter Deutsche who looks after the publishing of the Helvetia.

No less important are of course the rest of the busy team members including the proofreaders. The publishing of the Helvetia magazine seems to continuously throw up challenges as we try and get it to you on time.

Whilst we did do some updating of the website earlier in the year, we may have slipped a little in this department but Thomas Huber and David Latham have been very helpful in getting our changes implemented, so thanks guys for that.

A great thank you to the team at the embassy too. Dr David Vogelsanger, Jürg Bono and the team there have

been great to deal with. It goes without saying that David has enhanced the relationship between the Swiss Clubs and the Embassy. We certainly are enjoying the best relationship with the Embassy since I came to New Zealand and that's 40 years ago this year.

I don't know how many had the pleasure of attending either the Morgarten Celebration in November 2015 or the Aelperchbilbi earlier this year but both occasions, held at the Ambassador's residence were fantastic and it has rekindled some old friendships. Thank you David, for giving us the opportunity to enhance our Swiss culture and contacts.

Going back to some Society issues, you would have seen Peter Ehrler's reports in our magazine and I can assure you that we are very lucky to have him as OSA Delegate. Peter has been fighting tirelessly for us on the AHV issue and more recently on the AIA Initiative (Automatischer Information Austausch mit Neuseeland) and the best thing is; he is standing for re election for another 4 years. Thank you Peter, it's up to the members now to keep you there!!

My name has popped up on some correspondence on these topics and I want to thank David Vogelsanger and Peter Ehrler for their fantastic support. As you would have seen, the letter went to all Bundesräte and leaders of the major political parties. We actually did receive several replies which was pleasing from my point of view even if the reply was not exactly what we would have liked to hear. I know a good number of you have sent letters to Switzerland on this AIA topic. I have just received a letter via Peter indicating that the news media

has cottoned on to our activities and I think this is really great news. Watch this space

Let's not forget the OSA (Organisation for Swiss Abroad). I had the pleasure of attending the Oceania Swiss Conference in Melbourne last November. It was a very informative event with speeches on relevant topics from Swiss delegates as well as key local representatives. I did put a report in an earlier Helvetia and will not repeat this but for more information on the OSA, please look up www.csa-oceania.org

As we worked through the processing of the actual magazine we have discovered some issues affecting the costs of running this project. Cost is always an issue and whilst I propose to leave the fees at current levels we do need to look at avenues to reduce costs and increase efficiency. I know that some of you may have received your magazine too late. I can assure you that our team has always been on time with our tasks however we came unstuck with the mailing service and we are working on fixing this. Please accept my apologies for this.

Despite the Society and of course the magazine being 83 years young, I do believe it is in good health, has good support from the members and is set to be around for another good number of years.

Thank you all for your support and I look forward to seeing a good number of you at the upcoming AGM here in Hamilton.

Yours

Hans Vetsch
Society President



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