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Word from President and Editor

Hello everyone,

Here we are on the doorstep of another Christmas!!! Many of you will be starting Christmas shopping while reflecting on how fast this year has gone while wondering what next year will bring!!!

In this edition of the Helvetia we bring you a few Swiss Traditions, both new and old, that you may not be aware of such as "The Turnip Festival". I am always amazed at the discoveries I make while putting together another Helvetia and how a country that would nearly fit into our Canterbury region can have such diverse cultural experiences.

Recently Richard and I returned to lower South Island to revisit Swiss and Kiwi friends with whom we often socialised while living in Queenstown. While it continued to rain in the Waikato we enjoyed fine weather in the Deep South as well as beautiful scenery and felt blessed that for a short part of our lives we lived in this magnificent part of New Zealand.

I wish to send my heartfelt thanks to all on The Helvetia Team for all the time and effort you have all put into helping me produce Helvetia.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

See you in 2018

Heidi

Thank you to our advertisers

We would like to thank our fabulous advertisers for their continued support. You are of great importance to the on-going success of the Helvetia. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and a fabulous summer holiday season.

The Swiss Society and
Helvetia Team

Dear Members

On page 9 there is an article which came to us via the Swiss Embassy in Wellington and I think it's a very sobering read and a sincere call for help. One of the main purposes of setting up the Swiss Society was to help Swiss Citizens in New Zealand in times of real need.

I do see this as a great opportunity for the Swiss Society to help a deserving person to improve his and his family's life ahead. With this in mind your committee will discuss and decide what level of contribution is appropriate for this case. At the same time I would like to challenge all clubs and individual members to make a donation towards the training costs of Eli ' companion Taffy.

Let's help this young lad so he and his family can have a better time going forward. If anyone has questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact me direct. Counting on your support

And now for more personal addition : I would like to start with a Thank you to Anna Blaettler for her contribution to the last Helvetia magazine.

With my retirement in August this year, a new era began for Vreni and me. To kick it off we undertook a month long journey to the African continent, travelling to Cape Town, up through the length of Namibia and back to Botswana before ending at Victoria Falls and Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe. It was just a fantastic journey starting with one rainy day in Cape Town and sunshine from then on.

Temperatures changed from about 14 in Cape Town and Swakobmund to 30 plus in Etosha National Park, Okavango Delta and Victoria Falls. We were so impressed with the wildlife and its conservation efforts we experienced on our journey and it angers me to think that individuals from all over the world still enjoy shooting some of these rare trophy animals. I just enjoyed hunting with my camera!

Anyway, we returned to a cold and wet New Zealand with an election just around the corner. We obviously had a lot of catching up to do with family, friends and work around the home.

I hope the new government will actually make some positive decisions on some of the key social issues we have without derailing economic prosperity for New Zealand. We now have Winston Peters in a very powerful position and I will follow with interest what progress he is proposing to make on section 70 of the Social Security Act so we Swiss pensioners may finally keep the AHV we get from Switzerland.

You may or may not know that tremendous publicity was given to our plight back in Switzerland and a proposal to withdraw the AIA agreement that Switzerland was going to offer New Zealand is going through the political channels. Make no mistake, this only happened thanks to the tremendous efforts of our Ambassador Dr. David Vogelsanger and our OSA delegate Peter Ehrler . They have done an absolutely superb job and I would like to thank them both sincerely for standing up for us Swiss Citizens in New Zealand .

October is almost over, I hope your vege patch , that's if you have one , is planted and the garden in order to hopefully enter a warm and dry summer period after all this rain (yes farmers, not too dry!). Our plans are to spend time at the beach, we have a few projects there but enjoying summer, family and friends and the beach will be high on the priority list.

With this in mind I hope you all have your plans for summer in place, make sure you have some time off.

On behalf of the whole committee I wish you all the very best for the Festive Season. Merry Christmas and a very Prosperous New Year

[Signature]

President

Some Christmas Nostalgia...

With its picture perfect scenery and centuries old traditions, Switzerland is a great place to enjoy a white Christmas. There's a festivity in the air in Switzerland at Christmas time that visitors of all ages enjoy. Horse-drawn sleighs are a common sight in resorts and many villages hold Christmas markets.

Gstaad, receives a special visit each year from Santa Claus who walks with the town's children from the Posthotel Rössli, the oldest hotel in town, to the chapel.

Grindelwald is a fine example of a Switzerland Christmas village with plenty of fun things to do including sledging and snow-shoeing.

Whilst snow isn't guaranteed, **Bern, Geneva, Lucerne, Zurich and Basel** all have large Christmas markets and they definitely infect you with Christmas cheer, snow or no snow. This is also where the Swiss buy their Christmas trees – real pine trees not the plastic versions we are so used to here in New Zealand. One can see many a stall selling trees of all shapes and sizes, as well as branches of holly.

Basel's Christmas Market is Switzerland's largest with over 180 wooden huts set up in the heart of the city's Old Town. Towering above them is always one of Johann Wanner's famously decorated Christmas trees.

St. Gallen you can witness Switzerland's finest Christmas illuminations. An installation of 700 stars sparkles above the squares and streets in the Old Town creating an enchanting festive atmosphere. To add to the Christmas ambience, a giant Christmas tree stands in front of the Cathedral.

We could go on but we have run out of space!!!

Happy memories and Merry Christmas Everyone - Ed

Säg Samichlaus ischs wüerkli wohr?

Säg Samichlaus, ischs wüerkli wohr,
muesch du die meischi Zit vom Johr
im Wald usse Ruete binde,
für unfolgsami Chinde?

Für Chinde wo tüend umestoh
Wenn's schnell sötti go Poschte go
Wo mängsmol gar tüend trutze
Und nie rächt s Näsli putze?

Ein Brüderli nüt z spiele gänd,
wo d Wand verschmieret mit de Händ,
d Spielsache nid ufruume
und s Mueti so versuume?

Jo, Samichlaus, i gib-es zue,
au i hät dörfe netter tue,
doch will i jetzt dra danke;
tuesch mir glich öppis schenke?

I danke gwüss vo Härze froh,
hoff, s nöchsch Johr werdich wieder cho
bis denn bin-i e Guete,
bruchsch sicher nümme e Ruete!

Poems for Santa

According to Swiss tradition Santa visits Switzerland on 6 December and does not bring the actual Christmas presents – those are said to be brought by the Christchild. Instead, he takes a long a big bag filled with nuts, mandarins, cookies and chocolates, which he distributes to the children he visits depending on their behaviour during the past year.

The number of goodies one receives can sometimes be increased when the child (or adult) recites a poem or a short rhyme for Santa. Typically, these short poems are about the Santa tradition in Switzerland or the Christmas season. Some are simple while others are a bit humorous, which might not always be received well by the visiting Santa. Here is an example of a poem.

- Samichlaus du liebe Maa
(Santa Claus you're a good man) /
dörfi au es Nüssli haa?
(may I please have some nuts as well?)
- Samichlaus du bisch en Guete
(Santa Claus you're a good man) /
gäll ich bruche gwüss kei Ruete
(I won't need to be chastized, right?) /
Läär lieber hüt i eusem Huus (Instead, empty in our house) /
de allergröschti Chlaussack uus. (the biggest Santa bag.)
- Sami Niggi Näggi (Santa Claus) /
Hinterem Of stecki (I'm behind the oven) /
Gib mer Nuss und Bire (if you'll give me nuts and pears) /
de chumi weder füre. (I'll come out.)
- Samichlaus du guete Maa
(Santa Claus you're a good man) /
gäll ich mues kei Ruete haa. (surely I don't deserve the rod.) /
Gib sie lieber em Papi (Instead use it on Daddy) /
de isch de grösser Lappi. (he is the bigger dupe.)

Happy New Year & Best Wishes for 2018

