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Word from President and Editor

Dear Readers,

When you read this 2020 will have arrived but as I write this Christmas has been and New Year's Eve is yet to arrive. We had the family here and spent a few relaxing days together. I hope that your Christmas festivities went well wherever you were.

For some of our older readers the Army recruit story should bring back some memories (my husband Richard always says that he enjoyed the army and that he just had to heed what his father had said : "don't talk back just do what they say and you will be OK" and so it was.

Luke from Taranaki is following his heritage with great enthusiasm as you can see on page 9. Well done Luke!! Ernest Staheli's life story reveals the passion he has for sailing and I am sure he will be watching the up and coming Cup Challenge.

I pre-warn you now that there will be a smidgeon of nepotism in next few Helvetias as I write about some of my experiences on my recent trip. In this edition we go to the Momo Museum which I visited while staying with my brother-in-law Willi Wehrle and his family. In 1972 Willi spent a year with us while we were 50% sharemilking at Kiwitahi. He felt Switzerland suited him better and it is always interesting to visit with him at Loemenschwil. He always talks about swiss farmer subsidies and on page 3 you will find a reprint of a UK report re farmer subsidies in Switzerland. What do you think about them?

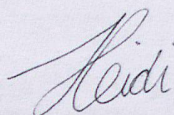
The article about Glaciers on page 12-13 shows there is still much to learn about how glaciers function, where the water goes etc.

There are many other informative articles.

I am going to start my New Year's resolutions list now - it gets shorter every year.

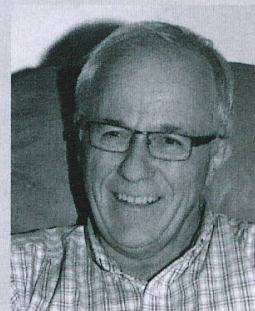
How did your list go? Have you broken your resolutions already?

Happy Reading.



Dear members

Another year has passed and I do hope that you had a good start to the new one. We just got back from our stay at the beach and I was reminded that my report was overdue. It is great to be supported by a good team and I hope the same applies to you in whatever you do. The weather was a bit of a mixed bag with lots of wind, rough sea but no rain.



With the departure of David Vogelsanger the position of Society Patron became vacant too. I contacted our new Ambassador and I am very pleased indeed to report to you now that Michael Winzap, our new Ambassador, has accepted the position as new Patron of the Swiss Society. I do hope you all will have the opportunity to meet our new Ambassador at some stage.

In my last report I mentioned that the cost of getting the Helvetia to you is more than the subscription we pay. We had a closer look and indeed we are spending more than we are collecting. Switching to an online distribution will save us a lot of money and will avoid a hefty increase in subscription fee this year. It is now, that we need to find out who will not be in a position to receive an online version. If we don't have this information we may not be able to serve everyone as well as we would like to. Please let your club or me know if this causes an issue. The matter will be tabled at the next AGM.

I changed over to the online version and I don't know why I didn't do it earlier. It's easy to read, you never misplace it and you can follow up on all the websites mentioned with ease. (Plus it doesn't clutter up your dining room table.) At the last AGM we discussed changes to the constitution and I am pleased to advise you that the new constitution has been accepted for registration. It has taken some time but we now have a document that better reflects what we actually do at club level.

I had to take a coffee break because I hit a blank while typing this report. I opened up the latest Swiss Review and there are some very interesting topics in there. From the increasing greening of the Federal Parliament roof to the increasing support of the green party and on to climate change and house ownership updates. The latest is worth noting. We complain how house ownership is dropping in New Zealand and is currently about 60%. Well, Switzerland has an increasing housing ownership but it's still sitting below 40%. This in a zero interest environment, I can't get my head around this but I do appreciate that we may not be as badly off as we think. The other thing I picked up is that the Swiss Revue in July will only be available on line. Read into this what you like but it's a significant shift and I was amused about the reasons given for doing this. Regardless of that, make sure you read page 30 to be informed. As you can see there is plenty to read. I hope you enjoy it and also enjoy the summer once it comes. Spare a thought for your Australian friends who are going through a very tough time with the horrendous fires all around the country.

Till next time

