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Autor: Vetsch, Hans

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President's Annual Report

Dear members

I hope you are all well and are mastering the challenge that Covid-19 threw at us. At the time of writing this report, we were halfway through the lockdown. I think a lot of us found it very challenging but I believe that the right call was made.

It is hard to believe that its 5 years since I was approached to consider taking on the presidency of the Swiss Society for a four-year term. It was in Wellington at their clubhouse, having a good time with friends when someone, who shall remain nameless, conned me in to accepting this job.

I had no idea what was involved in the job but knew the people from our club who put their hands up for all positions bar this one. With that in mind, I knew it was not going to be an impossible task. As I went through the term, I got to know a wide range of people I had little or no contact with prior. I probably attended more Swiss functions during these 4 years than in the previous 20 years.

I need to mention too that the support from the Ambassador during this term was outstanding. Never did I have so much positive communication with the embassy as during this term.

There were many other highlights and I wish to mention just a few:

- The committee members were just outstanding and so were our proofreaders. I cannot thank the people involved in running all parts of the affairs enough for their input and dedication. There was harmony in the team and everyone was willing to pitch in if required.
- Endless hours were spent by Peter Ehrler and the Ambassador over the 4 year term to highlight the injustice we Swiss pensioners are exposed to. Whilst you may not see any direct results now, I can assure you that this issue has now been highlighted with governments here and Switzerland. We now have other countries, much bigger than us, who are following up on the pension issue as it affects their citizens too. With the increased pressure from countries such as Canada, England, Germany and others we hope the New Zealand government will actually make some adjustments to the Social Security Act.
- I was privileged to attend two Oceania Presidents Conferences and the third one in Auckland this year will now be postponed due to Covid- 19. The relationship between Australian and New Zealand clubs has improved out of sight. There is a good information flow both ways and when it comes to representation in Switzerland we now make a combined effort where possible. It's a great occasion to make friends with Swiss people in Australia.
- During the term we had many meetings with Swiss officials and Club members and I can take many positive memories away from there.
- The committee made a commitment to host the 2020 Oceania presidents' conference here in New Zealand this year. Unfortunately this had to be postponed due to Covid 19 however we hope to be running it in October 2021.
- As a committee we reviewed the constitution and sports rules. This was not an easy task and it dragged on for two years. The main issue here was that we didn't follow what was written in the constitution and we felt that this had to be rectified .

This is my last report and I was hoping to go out on a high note. Sadly, Covid-19 threw a spanner in the works and we will not be able to get together this year for the AGM. Can I take the opportunity here to sincerely thank the whole team for what I believe was a job very well done and I look forward to handing this responsibility on to the Taranaki Club. I am convinced that they will do a tremendous job and I wish them well.

I wish you all well and hope to see you at a gathering somewhere.

Your outgoing president

