

# Le News

WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

Hebdomadaire gratuit N°15

Lake Geneva region 20 - 26 February 2014

www.lenews.ch

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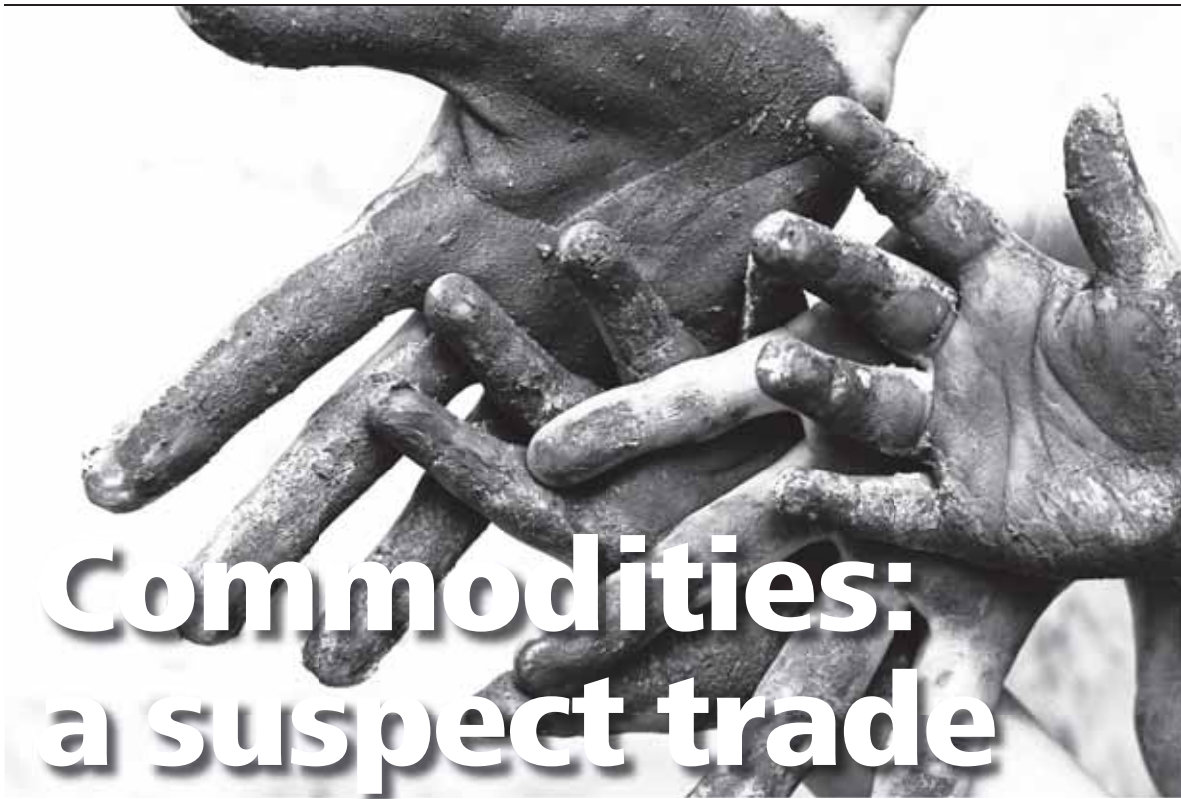
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## Commodities: a suspect trade

**GENEVA** Developing countries could be losing between \$8bn and \$120bn a year as a result of commodity mispricing in Switzerland, the world's leading commodities trading hub, according to a report published by the Centre for Global Development (CGD) in January.

Co-author Alex Cobham explained on

CGD's website that it had also found evidence of "larger illicit flows from Switzerland to other OECD countries, potentially in excess of \$500bn a year."

The report analysed 244 jurisdictions and 2,596 commodity categories. It found that the average price of exports to Switzerland is lower than to other jurisdictions. The Alpine nation also declares higher re-export prices. As a result, developing countries may be losing bil-

ions of dollars in potential tax revenue each year. "Systematic mispricing of trade allows money to be laundered, corrupt payments to be made and corporate profits to be illicitly shifted from their originating jurisdiction to another jurisdiction with much lower taxes," Alex Cobham told Le News. Switzerland accounts for 35% of global physical oil and 60% of metals and minerals trade.

**Continued on page 2**

**Next week** Home solar power prices continue to fall.

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## This Week in Switzerland



According to the recently released **Swiss Health Survey**, nearly one in five working citizens feels stressed at work. Those reporting symptoms of high stress are also five times more likely to experience symptoms of **depression**. Even though 83% of the population believe that their health is good or very good, 18% of the population reported experiencing psychological distress. The number of people seeking medical care because of **psychological problems** has increased over the past 15 years.

Switzerland's **immigration vote** has already caused adverse reaction from the EU which has **halted talks** related to research and education grants. In a political tit for tat, the EU has decided to postpone discussions related to the Horizon 2020 fund and Erasmus+ following Switzerland's refusal this week to sign a bilateral agreement with **Croatia** enabling Croat job-seekers access to the Swiss market.

Four hikers disappeared 88 years ago on the **Aletsch Glacier** in the Bernese Alps after the group set out to reach the junction of smaller glaciers that join to form the larger Aletsch Glacier. Remains of three bodies were found two years ago by British climbers. Mathematicians and glaciologists from Berlin and the Federal Institute of Technology Zurich have used a computer model to **calculate the glacier's flow** over time to determine where on the group's journey things took a turn for the worse. Findings published in the *Journal of Glaciology* show that it was at the northern valley of Grosser Aletschfirn that the men must have perished.

According to a price comparison survey, in 2013 prices of **patent-protected drugs** were 5% more expensive in Switzerland than in other European countries. However, generic products remain twice as expensive. Nevertheless, the pharmaceutical association **vips** supports requests by pharmaceutical companies for "adequate" **drug prices**, stating that such prices are necessary if companies are to earn sufficient margin on their products.

Despite Vaud's crackdown on **under-age alcohol consumption**, an inquest conducted by the canton's Foundation against Alcoholism found that 79% of under-18-year-olds can still purchase alcoholic beverages in public establishments. The results show that access is systemic: 84% can do so in bars or restaurants and 66% in shops. These alarming percentages point towards the possible implementation of **harsher sanctions** for future infringements.

As **e-viruses** become more complex and insidious, the extent to which companies try to keep informed and protect themselves is variable. **Symantec**, an American security software company, has released a report highlighting that small businesses are the most vulnerable to attack as they often assume that hackers will target larger multinationals. According to the report, 50% of attacks are aimed at companies with fewer than 2,500 employees. However multinationals and key infrastructure such as power stations are also at risk. As reported on swissinfo.ch, director of the Institute for Strategic Studies in Wädenswil Albert Stahel commented that, "Even today our security system is focused too much on traditional defence and neglects the whole **high-tech arsenal**."



## A suspect trade

**Continued front page 1**

Some 500 companies are active in the industry with 10,000 employees. The commodities sector also contributes 3.5% to Swiss GDP. Some 75% of Russian crude oil is traded through Geneva, which is also No.1 for grain and oilseed trading. "More than 90% of some developing countries' declared exports to Switzerland cannot be found in the data, because of the lack of comparable statistics on transit trade," the report said.

Most traded commodities never physically enter Switzerland and are not registered by Swiss customs. Instead, this "transit trade" is only recorded by the Central Bank as an export of services. "The scale of even our most conservative estimates suggest that the phenomenon should concern policy makers internationally," the report said.

Stéphane Graber, secretary general of the Geneva Trading and Shipping Association, which represents more than 80 companies in the city, told Le

News: "In addition to the role played by strong competition in preventing price manipulation, there are already tools in place to avoid mispricing and illicit movement of capital. Commodity trading houses are already highly regulated." Swiss trading companies, he said, "are not opposed to new regulation when relevant. But rather than adding new rules, it is more important to ensure consistency between regulations at the international level."

Switzerland has been scrutinized by campaigners regarding transparency and corruption. "It's an important issue of tax justice and accountability for Switzerland," Edward Harris of the Africa Progress Panel, told *Le News*. In a 2013 sector review, Bern noted the importance of commodities. However, it did not propose new industry regulations. An inter-ministerial working group is due to report to the Swiss government by April 2014 to monitor and provide early recognition of national and international developments in the commodities industry. *Moyette Marrett*

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## Regional

# le News

WEEKLY SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

## Editor's comment

## Lack of transparency, or is it corruption?

The European Union's unusual report earlier this month on corruption among its 28-member states suggests that we're not that different from Zimbabwe or Afghanistan. Ours may not be as obtuse as government officials demanding bribes, but it is corruption no matter how you define it. And while varying in nature and extent, it impinges on good governance and competitive markets. In some cases, it undermines citizen trust.

Switzerland, too, has its share of corruption, even if people prefer to use more congenial terms for what amounts to regulated or condoned graft. As one Morges businessman put it: "It's what the Swiss consider to be 'civilized' corruption without actually calling it that." This ranges from banks not being transparent about unjustified charges, to the police 'disappearing' a drunk driver incident because the driver was well-known.

Then, too, there're the back-handers for property deals, payoffs for information to foreign governments and cartels controlling markets. Moyette Marrett's piece on the CGD report accusing the country's commodity traders of practises costing the developing world billions in lost revenue highlights this. While contributing to GDP, this lack of transparency does not do much for the country's reputation. Given that Switzerland may soon impose immigrant

quotas, expect a return to the past and special deals, a coffee with the syndic (mayor) or police chief perhaps, to obtain work permits. *Edward Girardet, editor@lenews.ch*

## Avalanches: Still a danger

**DAVOS** By the end of January at least 25 people had died in avalanche-related deaths in the Swiss and French Alps since Christmas. A fatality in Nandaz this week brought the seasonal total for Switzerland alone to 14, including seven in Valais and one in Vaud. The national average, however, has remained a constant 22 over the past 20 years, despite rising numbers of people engaged in outdoor sports such as skiing and trekking. Thomas Stucki, avalanche forecaster for the Swiss Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research, attributes the linearity of this trend to "people having access to an array of information regarding avalanches and the attributed risks of mountain activities".

Stucki emphasizes the importance of "avoiding fresh wind-swept snow, going down steep slopes one-by-one and being aware of the dangers rising temperatures may have on unstable snowpacks". Statistics show that a person completely buried by snow has slightly more than a 50% chance of survival. "This is why everyone partaking in these activities should carry a beacon, probe and shovel, to be used in that order to recover an avalanche victim," added Stucki.

*Christopher Woodburn*

## Swiss salt mountain

## PRATTELN

As a result of the mild winter Schweizer Rheinsalinen (Swiss Salt Works), which operates the 150-year-old mine in the canton of Basel Land (BL) has accumulated 140,000 tonnes of road salt.

Production has been reduced until demand increases again. Some 20,000 tonnes of salt are required to de-ice all the nation's roads.

Although salt is damaging to the environment, it is the most cost-efficient way to keep roads ice-free in winter.



20,000 tonnes of salt are required to de-ice the nation's roads.

Thanks to the "moist salt" technique, the amount of salt required to thaw a square metre has been reduced to 5–20 grams. Salt moistened with brine is less prone to drifting, covers a wider area, is fast and has a longer-lasting effect.

Except for Vaud, which has its own traditional salt mine at Bex dating back to the 15th century, the Rhine Salt Works – owned by the cantons – supplies the whole country with

salt. After the harsh winters of previous years, the company made exceptionally high profits from sales. As a result, the price watchdog and the Rhine Salt Works have agreed that, instead of just paying dividends, the company would also give a rebate to buyers "to avoid profiteering in a monopoly market".

*Jane Duncan*

## Customs: a profitable 2013

- Switzerland imported CHF 509m and exported CHF 582m worth of goods every single day.
- 32 million customs declarations were made – also a record.
- 91 tons of smuggled meat was seized.
- 1,900 tons of smuggled hay was found
- 211 interventions made related to people smuggling.

In all a third of the government's income, a record CHF 24.1bn, was generated by Swiss customs – CHF 12.2bn from VAT on imports.

**GENEVA** The Swiss Air Force didn't respond to a hijacking over Swiss airspace on Monday because it happened outside the normal business hours of the nation's air force, which only flies between 08h00 and 17h00.

The Ethiopian Airlines 767 co-pilot hijacked his own flight while en route from Addis Ababa to Rome, and instead flew it to Geneva to seek asylum, according to ATA. But even though Italian and

## Hijack farce

French fighters were scrambled, Swiss fighter jets were grounded throughout the entire incident because of "budget and staffing" concerns.

The co-pilot took over the flight when the pilot left the cockpit for the toilet. On returning the pilot found the door locked and failed to regain entry despite trying to batter it down.

The hijacker requested asylum on his approach to Geneva. It was only when fuel levels fell to 10 minutes' flying time, that the hijacker agreed to land. Once parked on the tarmac, he tossed a rope out of the cockpit window and clambered down into the hands of the Geneva police (who incidentally were working).

*Le News*



The co-pilot did it.

## IMPRESSUM

le News  
LOCAL SWISS NEWS IN ENGLISH

Le News: ISSN 2296-6641  
Tirage imprimé: 26 000 exemplaires  
Lectorat estimé: 40 000 lecteurs  
Parution: tous les jeudis  
Rédacteur en chef: Edward Girardet  
Impression: Centre d'impression  
Lausanne

Directeur en charge de la publicité:  
Daniel Ahlers  
Régies publicitaires: SPN SA;  
Publicitas SA; Bab-Consulting Global  
Solutions Sàrl  
Edité par: Le News Sàrl  
Contact: <http://lenews.ch/contact>  
Le News Sàrl, WTC, Ave Gratta-Paille 2,  
1018 lausanne  
Classifieds: <http://lenews.ch/classifieds>  
Distribution: <http://lenews.ch/how-to-get>  
Editeur: Jeremy McTeague

Directeurs: Jeremy McTeague,  
Daniel Ahlers, Phillip Judd  
Mise en page: SPN SA, Département  
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## National

# Swiss image suffers

**GENEVA** In 2012, Switzerland's reputation ranked 8th among 50 countries on the Nation Brand Index largely due to its good governance and system of direct democracy.

A study by Presence Switzerland then categorized its overall image abroad as 'good'. For the current situation, however, Presence Switzerland's director, Nicolas Bideau, gave a more cautious assessment in a recent interview with Le Temps. "Overall, there is a rather negative tone in the coverage of the (9 February) vote," he said, adding that his office will simply work harder to explain Switzerland's unique system to others.

When the Swiss Secretary for EU affairs, Yves Rossier, meets with Euro diplomats in Brussels on 20 February, he will have his job cut out for him. Bern has already announced it will not sign an agreement to allow Croatia free



Switzerland has put the employment agreement with EU member, Croatia on hold.

access to the Swiss employment market. Neither side wants to activate a clause that would trigger suspension of all bilateral agreements if any one of them is violated. Both sides recognize that they benefit from Switzerland's

near complete access to the Union's single market. Around one million EU citizens live in Switzerland out of an overall population of eight million. Conversely, some 430,000 Swiss nationals live in EU member states.

## Google buys DeepMind

Two years ago, Shane Legg, a doctoral graduate of Università della Svizzera italiana (USI), along with Demis Hassabis and Mustafa Suleyman, founded DeepMind, a start-up dealing with technologies that bridge the gap between artificial intelligence and neuroscience to build general-purpose learning algorithms. Google has just acquired the company for roughly USD 500 million.

According to sector analysts, the Mountain View colossus offered better terms than its rival Facebook, which was also interested acquiring it.



Members of DeepMind including USI graduates Alex Graves, Daan Wierstra and Tom Schaul were previously part of the research group led by USI's Professor Schmidhuber. He was not surprised by the news: "Since 1989, we have been working on artificial neural networks (NN), inspired by the human brain, which are able to learn complex tasks adaptively.

The great thing about them is that they learn by themselves – thanks to sophisticated algorithms – on the basis of millions of training images, and then generalize what they have learned to test images they have never seen before. Because of their ability to recognize images, NNs are very important to the future of search engines, medical diagnosis and self-steering motor cars."

Jennifer Rose

## Becoming Swiss

**GENEVA** Faced with the unknown prospects of this month's referendum aimed at curbing immigration, some long-term residents eligible for naturalization are putting a rush on their applications.

So who can become Swiss, and how? Citizenship may be granted through three different channels: birth, marriage or naturalization. Contrary to the US, UK or Germany where naturalization is granted on a national basis, Switzerland's route to the red passport depends on local rather than federal rules. Communes and cantons decide whether they want you or not.

Changes in the law, however, have meant that foreign naturalizations have increased significantly, tripling between 1992 and 2012. According to federal statistics, 33,500 foreigners became Swiss in 2012. Since the early 2000s, three groups have dominated those seeking nationality: ex-Yugoslavs, Italians and Asians. Naturalizations are far more prevalent in cities such as Zurich (8,532) and Geneva (2,271), but far lower in conservative parts, notably the two Appenzells, which granted a total of 170 in 2012.

To become Swiss, you need to have been a resident for at least 12 years before making a federal request for citizenship. If approved, it's then up to the commune and canton. Both may introduce their own ad hoc requirements – which critics maintain opens the door to discrimination, and even racism (there appears to be a preference for Europeans). The cantons and communes have the absolute right to refuse the much sought-after *droit de cité de la commune et du canton*.

Christopher Woodburn



33,500 foreigners became Swiss in 2012.

## Business & Economy

# Lower rents and real estate prices?

**GENEVA** It is too soon to tell how Switzerland's landmark vote to re-impose quotas on European Union immigrants will affect rental and real estate prices in the Lake Geneva region, industry experts say.

The government has up to three years to implement the new restrictions.

"The vote is not going to have an immediate impact on the cost of renting a house or an apartment as large building projects are already under way in the region," said Assimina Walther, an independent real estate evaluator and architecture expert. "Employers will also look at the availability of accommodation before deciding to move employees to

Switzerland. In a year or two, though, there may be more properties to rent than we need and this could impact prices."

Prices for apartments in Switzerland have more than doubled in the last ten years and family home prices have increased by an average of 37%. Real estate experts Jones Lang LaSalle estimated that foreigners accounted for 75% of the increase in residential housing since 2007.

Credit Suisse researchers expect the pressure on rental accommodation in central areas to fall possibly prompting slight rent decreases. However, in the medium-to-long-term, they forecast increasing vacancy rates, primarily outside urban areas.

Moyette Marrett



The immigration vote is not going to have an immediate impact on the cost of renting property

# Swisscom injunction overturned

Judicial authorities have overturned a temporary injunction obtained by Switzerland's biggest telecommunications provider Swisscom to stop the Neue Zürcher Zeitung newspaper from publishing data stolen from the company. The NZZ said on Friday it was satisfied but not surprised by the outcome. Swisscom for its part said it accepted the decision, but pointed out the judge had made clear that any further piecemeal reports about the data leak could be in breach of the competition law.

*The tapes went missing en route to being destroyed*

The spat dates back to September 2013, when the Zurich-based newspaper announced that it had received four files of information. Names and contact details of Swisscom clients and the status of various projects were contained amid more mundane internal emails about barbecues and company cars, the NZZ reported. Swisscom, worried about the possibility of sensitive client data being contained on the tapes – which went missing en route to being destroyed



under routine circumstances – immediately filed a criminal complaint against persons unknown.

NZZ then published the names of a number of customers – some of them prominent Swisscom clients – in a 20 December 2013 article, which led to Swisscom asking for the temporary injunction against further publication of the data.

Swisscom added it was doing everything it could to ensure that all data

in the NZZ's possession was fully destroyed, and said it hoped that "the NZZ will continue to help establish exactly how the data tapes were stolen from Swisscom".

The company has also boosted its own security measures. An NZZ spokeswoman the newspaper now considered the matter closed.

Swissinfo

## Novartis to buy CoStim Pharmaceuticals

Novartis AG will buy Cambridge, Massachusetts-based CoStim Pharmaceuticals as part of its expansion into immunotherapy, a new area of cancer drugs that could generate billions of dollars in annual sales.

## Foreign firms create regional jobs

**GENEVA** It is now four years since the Greater Geneva Bern Area (GGBa) was established to promote investment in western Switzerland. The GGBa includes the cantons of Bern, Fribourg, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Geneva and Valais.

In 2013, 50 new foreign companies set up shop, creating 300 jobs. Despite the strong Swiss franc and uncertainty over corporate taxation levels, "the results in 2013 show that our region continues to be attractive to foreign investors," said GGBa President Jean-Michel Cina. The outlook for 2014 is good, especially for technology companies.

LeNews

## Insight

# E-cigarettes: helpful or harmful?

**FOUNEX** Many health and education experts feel that current regulations in Switzerland regarding electronic cigarettes do not go far enough, especially when it comes to protecting children under the age of 18.

Last month, David Woods, headmaster at La Chataignerie international school in Founex (VD), sent a newsletter to parents warning about the easy availability of electronic cigarettes. Woods said that such items are not appropriate for a school environment and that students found using them “on campus, on buses or on an official off-site school activity will be treated as if they have been smoking normal cigarettes.”

There are two types of e-cigarettes sold in Switzerland. One version is an inexpensive, plastic, disposable unit in various flavours to attract adolescents. However, it is illegal if it contains nicotine. Another rechargeable device can be purchased with up to 40 nicotine-filled replacement cartridges on a one time basis for personal use.

The battery-powered devices simulate smoking by heating and vaporizing a liquid containing an average 6–24mg of nicotine and other chemicals. In a statement last year, the World Health Organization noted that

e-cigarettes are “sometimes made to look like everyday items such as pens and USB memory sticks.”

The Federal Office of Public Health has also expressed concern that the consumption of e-cigarettes in on the rise among young people. And although the EU resisted calls for an EU wide ban in December, the UK is seek-

ing its own ban on the sale of e-cigarettes to children under 18.

The ban on smoking what are commonly referred to as “vapoteurs” on all Swiss trains, buses and trams went into effect on 15 December 2013. It wasn’t provoked by passenger complaints but rather by transport inspectors who had found it difficult to distinguish

between real cigarettes and their electronic version.

Devotees believe measures such as the public-transport ban are too heavy-handed since e-cigarettes help people stop smoking tobacco. This is a good reason, say health officials, to regulate them like other medicines.

*Pamela Taylor*



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## Education & Technology

# How does the IB compare to other diplomas?

**GENEVA** Sabine Hutcheson explores the requirements for the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, which is growing in popularity among international and Anglophone schools in Switzerland.



The IB Diploma enables students to access universities across the world.

The appeal of the IB Diploma is primarily its international approach. No particular culture is favoured and students are educated to become world citizens, preparing them for careers wherever they choose. It's also a popular choice for expat families given that it can be picked up anywhere in the world. Most major cities now have schools offering the IB. So this is a good choice for those not sure where they will end up next.

The IB, however, may not be the best choice for everyone. To obtain the Diploma, students need to do well across six distinct subject groups: main language; second language; experimental sciences; maths and computer sciences; the arts; and the individual and societies. This is similar to the Swiss Maturité, where students must study an even wider range of subjects. It suits students who are all-rounders, but is also helpful for those who do not know what they want to specialize in.

Other options are British A-Levels and, to a certain extent, the French Baccalauréate (colloquially known as le bac). In both the British and French systems, students choose the subjects they prefer. Whereas the French system

obliges students to specialize in scientific, literary or social studies paths, A-Levels offer complete freedom in the combination of subjects. The IB offers a certain amount of choice, but with its holistic philosophy, the programme promotes similar skills and expectations throughout the different stages of education in order to facilitate learning. This common practice of international perspective, problem solving and research techniques is reinforced by three compulsory elements: the Creativity, action, service project; the Extended Essay; and the Theory of Knowledge class. Each of these can add a point to the overall total of the final IB grade. This can make all the difference when applying to university.

The French Baccalauréate and, to a degree, the Swiss Maturité (La Matu) share the final grade system. (The IB is the total sum of all grades, while le bac and La Matu give the average). The A-Level differs by providing three separate grades, not unlike the five American Advanced Placement (AP) exams. Some may see the latter as an advantage, because weaker grades will not penalize success in a particular subject.

The IB Diploma, as the other three qualifications mentioned here, enables students to access universities across the world, although US colleges also require students to take SAT exams. These are not stand alone academic qualifications, but just a requirement

for admission. SAT exams are more about technique than content and so require adequate preparation.

While the overall education system is critical for choosing a path for one's children, the school itself should bear equal importance. Certain teaching styles may suit some students better than others, but a child who has been encouraged to be curious and to enjoy learning from an early age, who is used to having books in his daily life, and who is brought up to talk meaningfully within his family, will be successful in any school environment.

*Sabine Hutcheson is an education consultant and Academic Director at TutorsPlus in Geneva*

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## Chez Vous

# Homes are getting “smart”

**GENEVA** What if your home could tell you when to take medicine, or when your body needed more exercise, or if it could call for help if you became ill?

Or even find your reading glasses? Such so-called smart homes are approaching reality as Switzerland and other European countries increase their focus on researching new technologies for aging populations.

Population demographics in Europe are changing. The next few decades will be characterized by an older population living longer, more independent lives. The Swiss Federal Office for Statistics reports that at the end of 2012, 52.9% of the population was already over the age of 40. European data show that a quarter of Europe will be over 65 by 2035.

Institutions and corporations are looking for ways to meet the needs of people who wish to continue living independently in their homes with the assistance of information and communication technology. The aim is to allow inhabitants to enjoy a higher quality of life with minimum intrusion, but to be able to receive assistance when needed. Lucerne University of Applied Science and Arts has developed the iHomeLab, which focuses on building intelligence. Andreas Rumsch, senior research and development engineer at the iHomeLab, says they are developing new technology for what they call Ambient Assisted Living (AAL), or technology to assist people with personal security.

One type of smart home is specifically designed for personal security. It has sensors in all rooms of the home, which would recognize normal movement patterns. When those patterns became abnormal, such as a cared-for resident not going into the kitchen to make breakfast at the usual time, or if they went too frequently to the toilet, or not at all, the sensors would send an alert signal. If the resident does not acknowledge the signal, it would be forwarded to a remote receptor informing family or outside caregivers that something is awry. Rumsch maintains this could be as discreet as a lamp whose light bulb changes colour, or a

picture frame displaying a message. The recipient can then get in touch with the resident. If there is indeed a crisis, the recipient can either view the person's home via a webcam or notify emergency services. If necessary, the smart home can also notify emergency services itself.

Some AAL technology, such as internet alerts when a stove is left on, is already on the market, with companies including Switzerland's ABB forming alliances on development. Other, more complex technologies, such as sensors built into mattresses to measure heart rate and respiration rate, are still being fine-tuned.

Munich University of Technology last year unveiled its “Wonderwall”, essentially a high-tech wardrobe with a small touch screen. Through biosensors, it can do everything from monitoring the inhabitants' heart rates and blood pressure, or making recommendations such as taking a walk to reduce blood pressure. It can also locate misplaced glasses and warn residents if they're about to leave home without taking their keys, proving that a home could soon be smarter than its inhabitants.

*Jackie Campo*



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## Chez Vous

# Paying for a carafe d'eau

**FRIBOURG** A Fribourg restaurant has provoked debate over the charging for carafes of water because bottled water is an important source of revenue.

**G**astroFribourg, the restaurateur association, defended the practice, maintaining that a 2013 survey showed widespread member support for the practice if tap water is the only beverage ordered. While the association conceded that tap water costs almost nothing, it said that providing carafes of water involves costs for an industry under pressure.

Fribourg is not alone. In other Swiss establishments, it is not unusual to charge customers, causing acrimony particularly among visitors. Orders for a sirop or citron pressé now tend to come with bottled water. The irony is that it is happening at a time of growing concern about the environmental impact of plastic bottles. Recent queries with the Vaud and Geneva restaur-

rant associations about whether this posed poor public relations were ignored. Some customers are now boycotting places which impose tap water tariffs, normally CHF 2-3.

Geneva's Services Industriels launched a campaign in 2009 to brand "Eau de Genève" as the best way to get balanced minerals and contribute to preserving the environment. Its survey said that 90% of Genèveois agreed that local tap water is satisfactory. My Switzerland, the official tourism website, maintains that 80% of Swiss water comes from natural springs and groundwater, and the rest from lakes. "In some cases it so pristine you can drink straight out of the lake without a second thought!" The tradition that anyone reading the Official Gazette must be offered a free glass of water may be long gone. As, it would also seem, the tradition of providing tap water as a sign of welcome and hospitality.

*Pamela Taylor*



## Cracking up

# The battleship and the speedboat

The Good Witch of the North once said, "Age is something that doesn't matter, unless you are a cheese."

As much as I like the sound of that, I'm not convinced. Physically I'm in great shape, having played competitive netball in primary school. But I must admit, I'm already starting to miss my once-firm young mind. Because my mental elastic is gone; my brain is baggy. And nowhere is this more evident than in my relations with my seven-year-old.

My mind, like a battleship, needs a lot of time and effort to change direction. I like to focus on one thing, and just keep going. My daughter, on the other hand, has a speedboat mind: it's fast, it's agile and it makes a lot of noise.

A few weeks ago I stood in the dairy aisle of the supermarket, my battleship brain pondering the mysteries of organic butter and whether it really is CHF 7 a kilo better than normal butter, when my daughter's sharp little voice broke into my thought.

"Mum, how many teeth does a turtle have?"

"I don't know," I said, dragging my mind out of the butter. "I need to think about that."



Teeth on a turtle. I tried to picture Crush, the turtle in Finding Nemo. Hadn't he smiled a few times? Had there been teeth?

When we got to the vegetable section of the supermarket, she asked, "Mum, what exactly happened at Pompeii? And who wrote Mary Poppins?"

In the bread aisle, "What's the name of the Egyptian king who isn't Tutankhamun? Can I ride my scooter

on the highway? What's the most endangered animal on earth?"

In the checkout queue, "How do you say, 'My little sister stole my boots' in French?"

"Well," I said, as I loaded the groceries into the car. "I'm not sure they have any. I think they have a sort of beak."

"What?"

"Turtles. I don't think they have any teeth."

"I'm not talking about that any more!" she shouted, almost hysterical with impatience. "I've just asked you if I can invite everyone I know for a sleepover this weekend."

I can't keep up, honestly. If I followed every single thing she said, my brain would overload and I'd go mad.

I tried just vaguely muttering, "Yes, darling" for a while because that works very well on my husband, but the child soon caught on to that and tried to compromise me.

"You said I could!" she wailed one night, as we wrestled over the goldfish tank.

"I did not!"

"Yes you did! We were driving home and I said, 'Can I put the goldfish in the

bath with me?' and you said, 'Yes, darling!'"

I haven't solved the problem of my speedboat child but at least I know how to rebuild my damaged self-esteem: the four-year-old still thinks I'm wonderful. Her mind is like an inflatable dinghy, bobbing awestruck in my wake.

"Mummy," she breathed in wonder the other day, "How did you know I wanted to read a book about dinosaurs?"

I did not point out that dinosaurs are all she ever wants to read about. I just shrugged nonchalantly and said, "It must be because I'm so clever."

Her eyes filled with admiration. "Will I be as clever as you when I grow up?"

I thought of her speedboat sister, and how she was also once a dinghy. And how I was once a speedboat. It's the Regatta of Life.

"No," I said. "You'll be much cleverer."

*Robyn Goss is a South African writer, recently moved to Switzerland. You can read her blogs at [www.robbygoss.com](http://www.robbygoss.com)*

## Lifestyle

# Sat TV: Free foreign channels

Swiss and French services offer a limited array of channels, including some foreign, on a paid basis. You can obtain a far larger selection – and perhaps more to one's tastes – for free via satellite.

Most Swiss and French phone and cable companies offer 70 to 200 TV channels (plus radio stations) in French, German, English and other languages for CHF 15-50 a month. You have to pay more for specific sports or movie channels. However, if you simply wish to obtain the main UK, German, Russian, Polish, Arabic, Italian and even Indian channels, plus radio, then try the free services available via the Astra 19.2, the Astra 2 28.2 and Hotbird satellites. These give you access to hundreds of public and commercial channels, including BBC, ITV, SkyNews and

CNBC plus European stations. "For British people, FreeSat (a joint BBC-ITV free service competing with SkyDigital) is often a good solution to receive BBC and ITV programs," said Steve Opry of Satel Service ([www.satel-service.com](http://www.satel-service.com)) in Geneva. "But a lot of fans will go for extra paying channels. These can cost anywhere from US\$ 9.00 up to £67.75 a month."

Recently, most UK channels moved from Astra 2 28.2 to a new satellite. There is no need to change dishes, but some viewers fear that, for copyright reasons, the UK is now narrowing its signal to prevent 'outsiders' from viewing UK content. English satellite viewing, however, still offers a better choice of quality channels and HD.

The overall setup cost is from CHF 200-300 upwards. If you wish to receive both Astra 19.2/Hotbird – mainly European and Middle Eastern channels – and the replacement Astra 28.2 – 190 mainly English HD channels, including Al Jazeera, CNN, and



Depending on location, signals from up to three satellites can be received per dish.

France24, you only need one box. You can have up to three satellites per dish. Free-to-Air SatTV is more than most people need. New TV sets can receive free regional digital channels, although Geneva has a highly questionable CHF 28.90 monthly cable charge. Given that some Swiss apartment buildings do not allow the large 60 cm or 90 cm satellite dishes, new, discreet rectangular or square ones are available. *Le News*

## Cool in sites

These are thoughts...

You're an unappreciated philosopher. You've had profound thoughts, right? Well now you can read other unappreciated wise guys and even add your own thought-jewels.

[thesearethoughts.com](http://thesearethoughts.com)

Click to remove

While this does exactly what it promises, it is just about the most literal and pointless activity we've had the pleasure of telling you about.

[clicktoremove.com](http://clicktoremove.com)

**m**  
MAMBO  
Cocktail bar  
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### Samedi 1<sup>er</sup> Mars



[www.mambo.ch](http://www.mambo.ch)



Rue de Monthoux 60 - 1201 Genève | Table booking +41 (0)79 901 02 02

## Travel

# Don't waste that weekend: 10 tips for fabulous day trips

A perfect outing includes natural beauty, culture, fun and family.

**T**ake the time to explore this fabulous region.

1. Focus on a single destination or activity. Sometimes it's hard to stick to one thing, but you'll be glad that you spent quality time rather than rushing to fit everything in.

2. Don't drive more than three hours to get there. You need 4-5 hours to enjoy the experience. This still makes for a full day. It's also the limit for most people.

3. Adapt your speed. Let your kids set the pace. When I took mine to the Swiss Transport Museum in Lucerne, I couldn't keep up. Their enthusiasm made the day.

4. Vary trips. Follow a nature hike one weekend with a town visit the next. If a trip focuses on history, try something modern next. Alternate cultural events with fun activities.

5. Be flexible. If you had planned a museum day and the weather is glorious, head outdoors instead. Don't waste a beautiful day!

6. Do your homework. Know the opening times, how to get there, and cost. There are innumerable websites to make this easy.

7. Keep your sense of humour. Nothing ruins an outing faster than grumbling. Sometimes the things that go wrong bring the biggest smiles later.

8. Travelling time is family time, too. I believe in cultural osmosis. Use the time to talk to your children, play games, tell stories, give a bit of historical background, or discuss ideas for future outings.

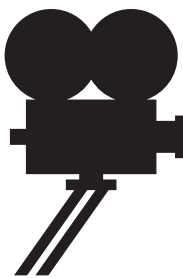


Family trips offer shared time to build close relationships and encourage healthy curiosity.

9. Think logistically. Pack a picnic if you're travelling around meal times, and take breaks. Bring a map, water and books or toys for the kids. Don't forget music, but agree ahead of time to tolerate everyone's choice (not always easy when taste ranges from grunge to German baroque).

10. Small children enjoy a change of pace, too. Don't assume that they'll get nothing out of a trip. Exposure at a young age to new experiences will increase their curiosity and yield a more rounded individual than a shopping mall kid.

Janet Hill



## FILM REVIEWS

By Neptune

### VIVA LA LIBERTA

★★★★

The excellent Italian actor Toni Servillo of *La Grande Bellezza* is back, enchanting us this time with a political allegory in which he portrays a set of twins who couldn't be more different. One of the twins is a top but ineffectual politician. When the other has to stand in for him, he manages to energize the nation with his fresh, honest approach. Along with Valerio Mastandrea and Valeria Bruni Tedeschi, this is typical Italian humour and wisdom written and directed by Roberto Ando with a sharp, satirical tinge to illustrate the never-ending folly of power politics.

(vo Italian)



### DALLAS BUYERS CLUB

★★★

AIDS in the 1980s – here is the loneliness and terror of the unknown, the tough road to finding the right drugs for the victims, and the true story of a Texan HIV patient who was given 30 days to live and his struggle to stay alive and help others in the same misery. Directed by Canadian Jean-Marc

Vallée, this is not a feel-good film and the script leaves some questions dangling. In fact one may come out of it depressed and shaken, but both Matthew McConaughey (who lost more than 40 pounds for this role) and the "beautiful" Jared Leto are exceptional. And they have been grabbing many acting awards along the way.



# Local Ads



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give **WARMTH** for Syria



© Tearfund/Eleanor Bentall

Text **MEDAIR 15** to **488** to give 15 Francs to help Syrian refugees.

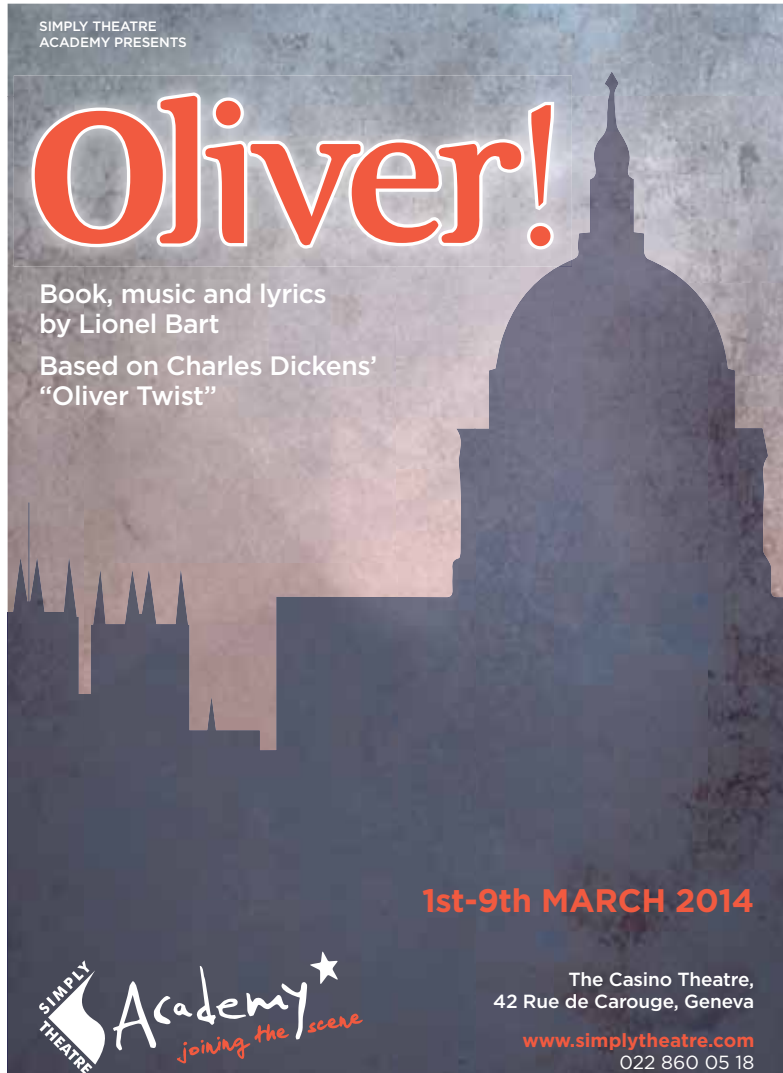
Aisha and her baby sister survived the fighting in Syria. Now they have to survive the winter.

CCP 10-648-6 medair.org **MEDAIR**

SIMPLY THEATRE ACADEMY PRESENTS

# Oliver!

Book, music and lyrics by Lionel Bart  
Based on Charles Dickens' "Oliver Twist"



**1st-9th MARCH 2014**

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www.simplytheatre.com 022 860 05 18



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Café du Centre, Genève      Jardin d'Asie, Lausanne



## Classifieds

### L'EDUCATION

#### French tutoring

Graduate in French language and literature from the University of Geneva and experienced tutor available for supporting children and young adults in learning the French language. Easy-going conversation classes also available. Near Montreux RR station. Agata Carlin +41(0)79.383.50.86

#### English tutoring

Experienced English native tutor for children and adults. Preparation for exams, conversational practice or structured lesson plan possible. Rates negotiable.  
Email: jacrose6562@gmail.com

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Email: ndeluze@gmail.com

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For more information: [www.espacelutry.ch](http://www.espacelutry.ch)

### LE WANT TO SELL STUFF

**Ikea mattress (Fossing) 90cm x 200 cm**  
Nearly new, firm Ikea mattress - CHF 250. Nyon area. Buyer to collect.  
[enilect@gmail.com](mailto:enilect@gmail.com)



#### Mario Wii U game

Winter Olympic Games - Sochi 2014. Never been used. CHF 35 + CHF 9 postage. Contact: [pgjudd@yahoo.com](mailto:pgjudd@yahoo.com)

### LES POSITIONS VACANT

#### Home help wanted

Girl Friday required, large house, West Lausanne. Part of team. £500/week.  
Beate Keisa +44.752.844.1672

#### Nurse required

West Lausanne. SRN / SEN preferred, but will consider others. £800/week.  
Beate Keisa +44.752.844.1672

#### Doctor wanted

Full time, will train you to eradicate cancer using ultrasonography, and later set you up in your own clinic. West Lausanne.  
Beate Keisa +44.752.844.1672

### LES PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

#### Handyman & Renovation Services

British duo specialising in the full spectrum of home and garden handyman and renovation services. Legal and insured with 9 years, hands-on experience in Switzerland. Covering Vaud & Geneva area. Free No obligation quotes available. No job too small. Tel: +41(0)78.805.31.59  
Email: [jay@conciierge-swiss.com](mailto:jay@conciierge-swiss.com)

#### JEWELRY AND WATCHMAKING

L'Age d'Or, in the heart of Vevey - Modern as well as timeless jewelry and watches. Quality customer service in English and in French, and an in-house service centre for jewelry, watch and clock repairs and alterations. Horlogerie-Bijouterie L'Age d'Or-Vevey. +41(0)21 921 18 13 [www.agedor.ch](http://www.agedor.ch)

#### Videographer

English speaking pro VIDEOGRAPHER for interviews, seminars, conferences, video optimized for the web, online training solutions, TV ads, theater plays and more. Rates and show reel at [www.cartesius.tv](http://www.cartesius.tv) - Contact John Mallidis +41(0)79.524.29.80

#### Need a website?

For small businesses, clubs and associations etc. I will create that special site for you. CHF 50-200. See my work: <http://celinev1.wix.com/appart>  
Please contact: [enilect@gmail.com](mailto:enilect@gmail.com)

### LE PROPERTY

#### 5 room lakefront apartment - 114 m<sup>2</sup>

Located at Pully, surrounded by greenery, this calm and sunny 5 room lakefront apartment comprises of 2 double bedrooms, 1 single bedroom, 2 bathrooms, a living room, dining area, balcony, kitchen, parking & garage. Available: 1 March, Frs. 3'080  
Contact: +41(0)78.694.01.67  
or [jacque1990@yahoo.com](mailto:jacque1990@yahoo.com)



#### Large family home for sale in Lutry.

320 m<sup>2</sup> home on 1101 m<sup>2</sup> parcel. No nuisances. Short walk to Lutry village, public transportation, shops. 10.5+ pieces. View, solar heated pool, 4 bedrooms each with en suite bathroom + separate independent access 1 bedroom/1bathroom apartment, perfect for au pair, business office or rental income. Kathryn Billington 079 783 8248



#### Couple seeks apartment

Young professional couple seeks affordable apartment in Lausanne area, references available. Please contact +41(0)77.497.75.60, [jacrose6562@gmail.com](mailto:jacrose6562@gmail.com)

### LE MISCELLANEOUS

#### Scots Kirk Business Network Presentation and networking event

Thursday 20th February at 19.30  
«Organisational cultures» - Alfred Colliander  
The presentation will be followed by a networking Apéro. The event is free although donations are requested to cover the cost of refreshments. Guests are warmly encouraged to attend.  
St Andrew's House, The Scots Kirk  
Avenue de Rumine 26, Lausanne  
Please register by emailing: [skbn@scotskirklausanne.ch](mailto:skbn@scotskirklausanne.ch)

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Hold your family reunion, worship, birthday, or business event at the Bookafé - Rue de Montbrillant 84-90, 1202 Genève.  
Flexible function room accommodates 50 people. 1 hour - CHF 40, 2 hours - CHF 75, 3 hours - CHF 100. To reserve, phone +41(0) 022 733 30 32/+41(0)78 760 73 15  
[www.bookafe.ch](http://www.bookafe.ch)



#### Geneva Curry Club

Expats and locals come together regularly to enjoy a curry night in the Geneva region. Great for making friends and since 2006 there have been two weddings!  
For more info: [www.curryclubgeneva.org](http://www.curryclubgeneva.org)

### LE MEET

#### Anyone fancy drinks out / dinner out

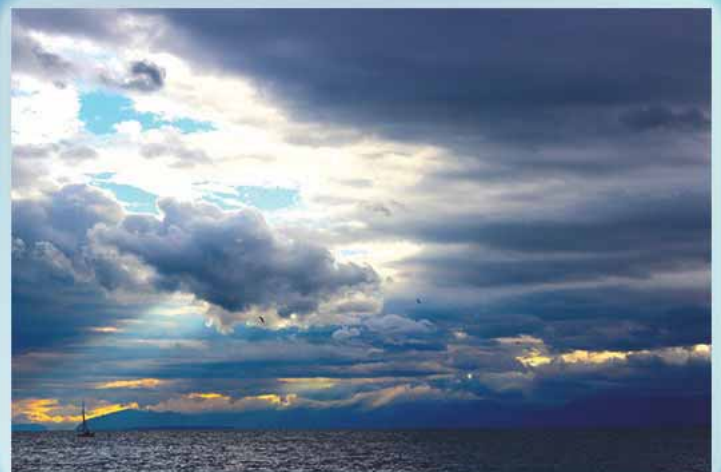
Dinner and drinks at our place in West Lausanne?  
Beate Keisa +44.752.844.1672

## Le News photo competition

Le News is offering a Payot book token worth CHF 20 and the chance to be published to the photographer who submits the best photo and caption on the subject of:

**"INVENTION"**  
Email your entry to [competition@lenews.ch](mailto:competition@lenews.ch)  
by 25 February 2014.

Congratulations to Danielle Lynch, winner of the Le News weekly photographic competition "Fantasy".



"Sea Voyage", Danielle Lynch

## Regional Events



These events have been recommended by Know-it-all passport!

More events on: [www.knowitall.ch](http://www.knowitall.ch)

### Geneva BATTLE B-BOYING 2 VS 2 Groove N Move Festival

13-22 February 13h00-17h00

This competition will showcase the art of B-boying, commonly called breakdancing, dance style born in the streets of New York in the late 1970s and focuses primarily on the figures on the ground. The B-boys/B-girls will compete in teams of two in front of a jury of three professionals who judge their artistic talent, technique, but also their creativity and individual style. Price: Fr. 10.-/person.

1, pl. des Cinq-Continents  
1217 Meyrin  
[www.groove-n-move.ch](http://www.groove-n-move.ch)



### Cruseilles, France CHANGEZ D'AIR: GASTRONOMIC WALK

23 February 10h00-17h30

A 2-hour snow-shoe expedition up to a panoramic view of the snowy mountains in Glières, a wonderful warming lunch of tartiflette and accompanying food and drinks, and a well-deserved easy 45-minute descent. The denivelation of 300m is not too bad. Make sure to bring the appropriate clothing. Snowshoes can be rented. Price: €60.-/person includes lunch and drinks. Reservations obligatory through Changez d'Air.

Meet at the Town Hall in Cruseilles, France at 10h.  
[www.changezdair.com](http://www.changezdair.com)



### La Tour-de-Peilz and Vevey, VD 1 JOURNEE – 2 MUSEES

25-28 February 9h15-16h00

One day – 2 museums. The Musée Suisse du Jeu and the Alimentarium have joined forces to bring you more than one day over the holiday week, themed on the region of Maghreb. Not only does this area know how to bring color to everything, but the people's enthusiasm is reflected in their food as well. Why not make a day of it and take the kids to learn about some of their typical games and foods?

Musée Suisse du Jeu, La Tour-de-Peilz, [www.museedujeu.ch](http://www.museedujeu.ch)  
Alimentarium, Quai Perdonnet 25  
1800 Vevey  
[www.alimentarium.ch](http://www.alimentarium.ch)



### Geneva/Lausanne INTERNATIONAL COMEDY CLUB

25 February: Geneva, 26 February: Lausanne  
19h00 doors, 20h00 show

Joey Page has spent the last few years bouncing around the comedy circuit, supporting the likes of Josie Long and Noel Fielding and appearing on shows such as BBC 3's comedy marathon, Nevermind the Buzzcocks and Noel Fielding's Luxury comedy. He did have a childhood dream to become a wrestler, dinosaur, or spaceman but luckily has settled on becoming a stand-up comedian.

Uptown Geneva, 2, Rue de la Servette  
Le Lido Lausanne, Rue de Bourg 17



### Nyon, VD FONDUE EVENING FOR EXPATRIATES

26 February, 19h30

For the second time, a joint collaboration between the Nyon Tourist Office, Living in Nyon, and the Ecole-Club Migros are hosting another great fun fondue evening. For just Fr. 20.-/person you can learn how to make your own fondue, discover more about the Nyon region, ask questions about living here and meet new people at the same time! Places are limited and reservations required.

Château de Nyon  
Wine Cellar  
1260 Nyon



le News

PICK OF THE WEEK IN COLLABORATION WITH



### Leysin Ice skating disco Disco sur glace

22 February, 19h30-21h30

Leysin ice rink invites skaters to hit the rink for a disco night, combining dancing, skating and music. Tickets for CHF 6.

Centre Sportif de la Patinoire  
1854 Leysin



### Gryon Dog sled ride experience

25 February – 26 February

Try dog sledding on the plateau of Cerngement for an exhilarating wintertime experience. Contact Gryon tourism to register on 0244980000. Tickets CHF 25 for adults and CHF 10 for children.

Route de Solalex, Gryon



### Geneva Grooves exhibition

31 January- 1 March, Tuesday to Saturday 14h00 to 18h00

Exhibition in collaboration with the Spoutnik, Cave12 as well as the City and Canton that is showcasing art around the theme of vinyl records.

Halle Nord- Espace d'art contemporain  
Place de l'Île 1, 1204 Genève



### Lignon Sonia Grimm Children's Concert

1 March- 2 March from 16h00

Children's performer Sonia Grimm will present an action packed musical narrative on the adventures around «Le défi sacré du grand totem», or the sacred challenge of the totem pole. Tickets ranging from CHF 10-20

Salle des Fêtes du Lignon  
19 Place du Lignon 1219 Le Lignon



### Geneva Voca People Concert

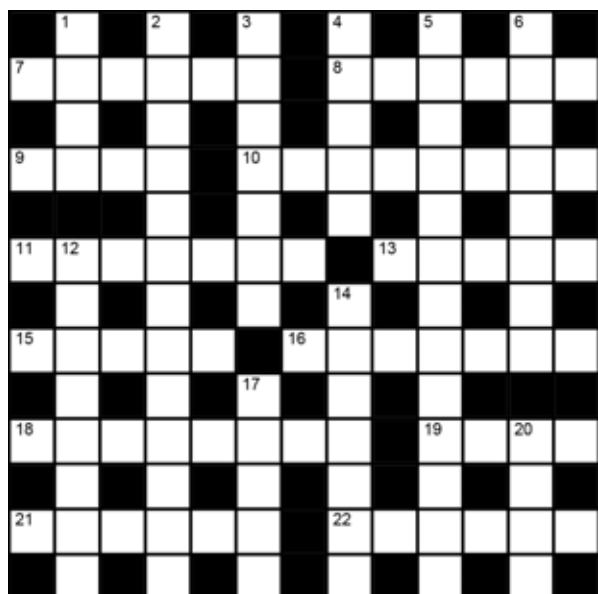
25 February 20h30

The Voca People are performing vocal theater combining a cappella and beat box vocals to reproduce the sounds of an entire orchestra. Dressed completely white in appearance except their lips, which are red, they float around in space in their ship, which is powered by nothing more than music.

Théâtre du Léman, Quai du Mont-Blanc 19, 1201, Geneva



# Puzzles



## QUICK CROSSWORD

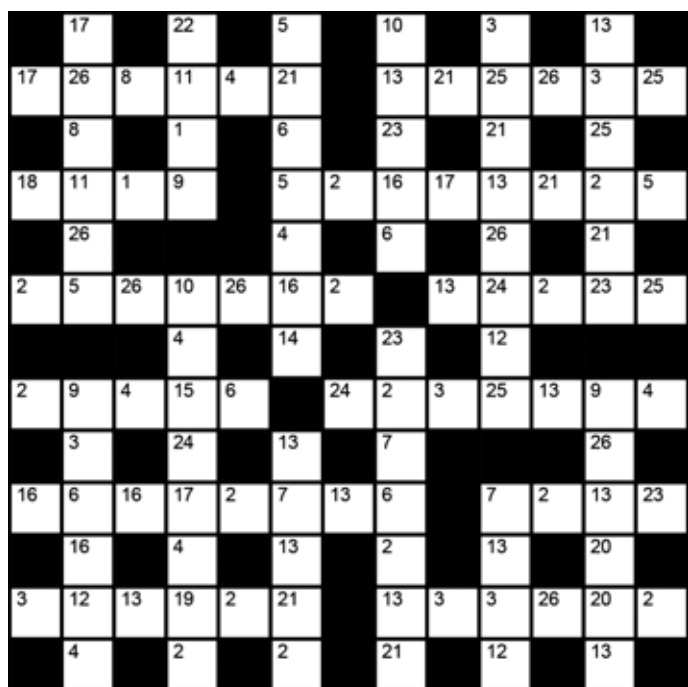
**ACROSS**

- 7 Done or happening at the appropriate or proper juncture (6)
- 8 Large prawn or shrimp sauted with garlic (6)
- 9 A warm tubular covering for the hands
- 10 Huge Ferris (3,5)
- 11 Jetted cloud of particles (7)
- 13 Liquorice-flavoured seeds (5)
- 15 Uniform projections on a gear (5)
- 16 Small toothed whales (7)
- 18 Chamber housing a piston (8)
- 19 Dumbed down soft tortilla (4)
- 21 Summerhouse (6)
- 22 Ancient and modern basic unit of money (6)

**DOWN**

- 1 Instead (4)
- 2 Complete and independent (4-9)
- 3 Supercilium (7)
- 4 Accepted or habitual practice (5)
- 5 Hyper-advertised soap (7,6)
- 6 Post-slope fun (5-3)
- 12 Mundane (8)
- 14 One who travels for pleasure (7)
- 17 Farewell, amigo (5)
- 20 So be it (4)

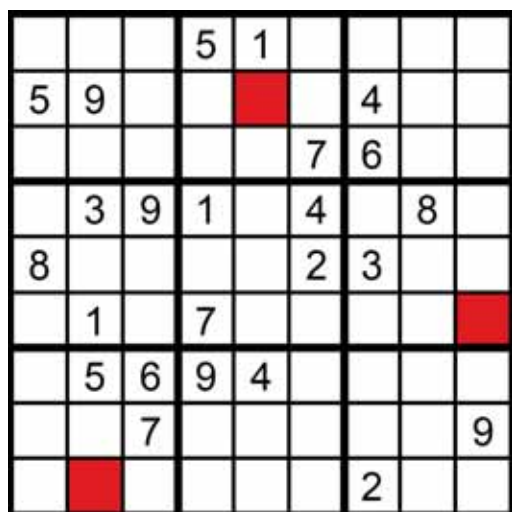
Last week's solution



## CODEWORDS

Each letter has been replaced by the same number throughout the puzzle. Simply decide which letter is represented by which number and complete the puzzle. To start off we're given you the first three letters.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		S					Q					
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
			L									



## SUDOKU

**Easy**

Enter numbers into the blank spaces so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

## What's On

### Human Rights Film Festival

**GENEVA** The City of Calvin's popular human rights film festival will run from 7 to 16 March, with expectations high that it will exceed all previous audience records. Leo Kaneman, director of International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH) has found a unique formula to attract interest in the grim issues that many prefer not to see on the TV news. His secret is to invite filmmakers, diplomats, human-rights defenders and journalists from around the world to take part in debates, in which the audience can also participate, following the films. "We believe that film is not simply an artistic project, it plays an essential role in our society... to shine light on attacks on human dignity," Kaneman said.



Lebanese journalist Joumana Haddad and Navi Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The participation of Pillay illustrates how far the UN body has come since 2003, when FIFDH was created to focus attention on issues it felt were ignored by the Human Rights Council. Kaneman said that while there has been a marked improvement in recent years, "silence continues to prevail on certain violations".

This year's festival is dedicated to Ales Bialiatski, an imprisoned human rights defender from Belarus and Sombath Somphone, who is missing in Laos. The debates will revolve around films about Syria, Guantanamo, war rape and the rise of extremism in Europe. "Right-wing ideas are gaining influence throughout Europe," noted Kaneman, "particularly with regard to foreigners, as we have seen recently in Switzerland." *Le News* has a number of free tickets for readers.

Email prizes@lenews.ch.

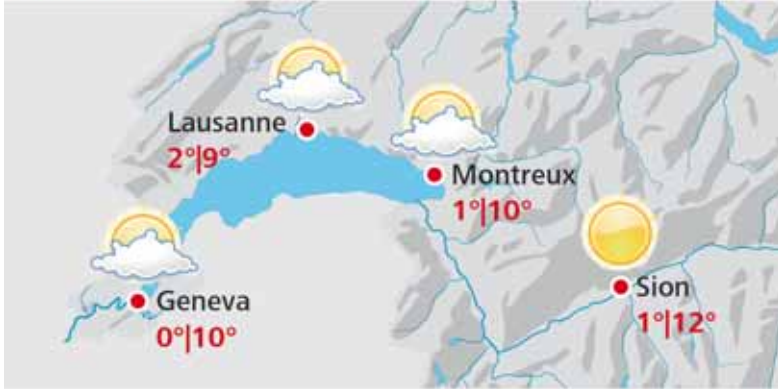
Pamela Taylor

**Win!**

**Sudoku:** Send us the three numbers in the shaded squares for a chance to win CHF 10.00. The first correct answer drawn next Monday will win. Email: prizes@lenews.ch  
**Code word:** Send us the three letters in the shaded squares for a chance to win CHF 10.00. The first correct answer drawn next Monday will win. Email: prizes@lenews.ch

# Weather

## SUISSE ROMANDE



	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>GENEVA</b>	0 10°	3 10°	1 9°	1 10°
<b>LAUSANNE</b>	0 7°	2 6°	0 6°	0 7°

### SNOW REPORT - ON THE SLOPES

Verbier	165 cm	Crans Montana	215 cm	Les Rousses	180 cm
Villars	150 cm	Château d'Oex	90 cm	Chamonix	215 cm
Leysin	180 cm	Les Crosets	200 cm	Morzine	300 cm

The ski & snow report is sponsored by



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- Sécurité de l'information
- Stratégie marketing, communications & e-business

### Information Session

Thursday  
February 27, 2014  
6 pm

UniMail  
40 Bd du Pont d'Arve  
1205 Geneva  
Tram 15/12 or parking

Present at  
QS World MBA Tour - Paris  
March 22, 2014

*In English*

- Aviation
- Commodity Trading
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- International Organizations
- Strategic Marketing
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- 2.0 Telecommunication & Internet



[hec-executive.ch](http://hec-executive.ch)

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